PS 2552
.B6
1881
Copy 1

BOK O'HILOVE

STORIES

NORA PERRY

J.R.O. & J.C.O.

Class PS2552

Book .B6

Copyright No. 1881

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

A BOOK

OF

LOVE STORIES

BY

NORA PERRY

AUTHOR OF "AFTER THE BALL," "HER LOVER'S FRIEND,"
"THE TRAGEDY OF THE UNEXPECTED"

JUN 2 1881
94.15.2

BOSTON

JAMES R. OSGOOD AND COMPANY

1881

copy 2

PS2552
.B6
1881

Copyright, 1881,
By James R. Osgood and Company.

All rights reserved.

12-37761

University Press:
John Wilson and Son, Cambridge.

TO

My Relative and Friend,

JEANIE CURTIS STEVENSON.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
DOLLY	9
DICK HALLIDAY'S WIFE	54
LAURA AND HER HERO	74
CHRISTINE	115
MR. AND MRS. MEYER	141
THE CHARMER CHARMED	164
AFTER FIVE YEARS	188
JOHN ECCLESTON'S THANKSGIVING	223
AN HEIRESS	242
MARGARET FREYER'S HEART	270

A BOOK OF LOVE STORIES.

DOLLY.

I.

SHE sat by the fire — a little low fire in a little low grate — warming her feet, or pretending to, this heroine of mine, this Dolly, otherwise Dorothea, otherwise Miss Brooks. She had sat thus for an hour already, and an hour ago it was high time to go to bed, according to all respectable and reasonable notions; for an hour ago it was eleven, and now the little black hands on the little yellow-faced old clock were pointing to twelve. But Dolly did n't mind. Pretty soon the little yellow-faced clock would gather up all its energies, and in a perfect whiz and whir of excitement would jerk out twelve strokes with its lusty little hammer. Twelve strokes, each one of which would say as plainly as such a hammer could, "Go to bed, Dolly; go to bed, Dolly; go to bed, Dolly!"

But Dolly would n't mind that either. Dolly would n't go to bed until she was ready; until she had got her thoughts untied, to use her own expression. And her thoughts were in such a snarl just now. So, spite of the whiz and the whir, and the scolding admonition of

the little yellow-faced old clock, Dolly still sat on, her hands clasped behind her head, and her tawny locks falling all about her shoulders in a cloudy confusion of loosened crimps and curls.

Her brow was knitted, and her eyes full of the perplexities of her thought, yet spite of these signs of gravity and seriousness, Dolly looked so young, so girl-like, sitting there in her white dressing-sacque, with her pink and white face, and her great crop of bright hair framing it, that you would have said her perplexities were only of the lightest and most girlish description.

But you don't know Dolly yet; and you don't know Dolly's history and her daily life, and her troubles and trials. If you did, you would know that she did n't spend her time sitting up over small perplexities. Dolly had seen too much and known too much of the great perplexities to fool away her time, her "beauty-sleep" like that.

Whir, whir, tick, tick, goes the noisy little clock, and whir, whir, tick, tick, go Dolly's thoughts in this wise: —

"It *is* hard, spite of all the grand talk about womanly independence, for a little body like me to be independent. I 've tried it now for a good while, and I must say it 's up-hill work for me. Up-hill work, and the years are going on and on, and by and by I shall lose all these fresh looks and these yellow locks that get so much praise now; and then I shall find myself old and alone in the world some day. Oh dear, I wish my composition had something it has n't! I wish I had

more faith in myself, more courage; but life frightens me as I look forward and see myself a lonely little old woman. Yes, I am afraid to trust to my genius, though they all say I have it. I 'm afraid to go on and on with the years, with only my art for companion and support; for I 'm not a good worker. I get worried and dispirited, and then my inspiration goes, and I feel only the dull labor. I can't make myself into a machine, neither can I keep myself at high-pressure all the time, and that makes me a vagabond, that makes me troubled and worried half the time. And out of this trouble and worry, out of this raging river of uncertainties, there is an opportunity for me to step into a safe little boat, and row, or be rowed, safely to shore. And I can't, oh, I can't make up my mind to step in! It 's such a very safe little boat, such a trig, trim little craft; and it would row so carefully and slowly, and in such a narrow channel all the way. And that is what repels me, — all this safety and smoothness and calmness, because it 's the safety and smoothness and calmness of something so alien to me. It is the safety of a limit, and not of strength and power; and such kind of safety I 'm afraid would be very unsafe for me. I'm afraid I should grow rebellious, and feel chafed and fretted like a caged creature. And then this would only bring me into another worry, — 'out of the frying-pan into the fire.' But is there any worry like this worry from day to day about what we shall eat, and what we shall drink, and wherewithal we shall be clothed? Ah me, what had I better do? I 'm a coward to ask the question, I know that; but there 's

one thing I 'll conclude upon at once. I 'll see the owner of this trim little boat, — this careful oarsman. I 'll see him, as Bab desires, to-morrow night. I 'll see him while she is away, and then I can tell better what manner of man he is. Perhaps, after all, he 's more than I think. I 'm too rapid, maybe, in my judgments, — believe too much in my first impressions. Yes, I 'll see him; and there the matter shall rest for the present."

And coming to this conclusion Dolly stretched out her arms, and opened her mouth very wide, showing all her little irregular white teeth in a long-drawn yawn. There was a great cat sleeping on the corner of the rug, who waked up at this yawn, and gave an inquiring *miaw*, looking at Dolly with round, staring eyes of amazement. Dolly laughed, and put out her hand.

"Come here, Major!" and Major gave a spring and seated himself in Dolly's lap. "Now, Major," proceeded Dolly, "I want to tell you something. I 've made up my mind to see Bab's bachelor to-morrow night. Bab says he wants to marry me, and that it will be a good thing for me. What do you think of that, Major? Do you approve?"

"*Miaw*," went the Major, and then he winked knowingly with one of his straw-colored eyes.

"Oh, you think it worth consideration; I thought you would. You know just how lonesome it is living here all alone, don't you? You know just how hard it is to forage for yourself, and then to find only skim-milk in your saucer?"

Major gave a most energetic *miaw* here.

"Oh, Major, Major," cried out Dolly at this, "what a worldly old cat you are, to be willing to sell yourself for a pot of cream every day! Don't you know how that turns out a mess of pottage sometimes? Oh, Major, Major, you 'd a great deal better keep up your courage, and go mousing about on your own hook, with now and then a chance of skim-milk."

And scourging herself over Major's shoulders in this fantastic way, Dolly stroked the purring cat and regarded him with great, sad, introverted eyes, that, spite of the smiling lips, revealed the sadness of her heart. And after a minute spent thus, she rose, put Major softly down upon his corner of the rug, and went off to bed humming that sweetest, mournfulest old song, "Auld Robin Gray."

II.

I shall have to tell you a little more about Dolly than she has managed to tell herself, after all. I shall have to tell you who Bab is, and a little about Aunt Jo. Bab was a married friend who was pretty Barbara Slade once, and was now Mrs. Barbara Ingalls. She was very fond of Dolly, and had latterly got an idea into her head that Dolly ought to be married. She knew something of Dolly's life, — not all the ins and outs, for Dolly, frank as she seemed, had those deep reserves which very proud and sensitive people are sure to have. There were straits in Dolly's life which she had never told anybody, not even Major, whom she declared to

be her most confidential friend. But Bab knew that Dolly lived alone with Aunt Jo, and that when Aunt Jo died the little annuity died with her, and Dolly would have to shirk for herself in the world.

To Barbara Ingalls, who had a sure home, and a fine one too, who had somebody to look out for her at every turn, this having to shirk for one's self was a matter of terror. So, thinking the matter over and over one day, after finding Dolly wearying about some household tasks that were too much for her, she came to this conclusion, — that Dolly ought to marry. And suddenly coming to this conclusion, she came quite as suddenly to the hero who was to play the principal part in her plan, — to Mr. Herman Morris, whose quiet attentions to Dolly the past winter had been swiftly but shrewdly interpreted by wise Mrs. Barbara. Dolly, preoccupied, had failed to see what Mrs. Barbara saw, until that lady opened her eyes. She laughed at first, but Barbara persisted, and her perplexities increasing, as perplexities will, until everything all at once seems to get into a hard knot, she at last consented to think of the matter. "He is the most gentlemanly man of my acquaintance, quiet, retiring, and modest, — such a man as Aunt Jo will be sure to approve," said Bab diplomatically.

And Aunt Jo?

Well, it is difficult to do justice to Aunt Jo. She and Dolly lived together alone in the smallest possible way on the smallest possible means. And Aunt Jo, who was seventy, and had brought up half a dozen of those rampageous Brooks children, and buried all but

Dolly, was as bright and sweet and sunny as if life had given her all its roses instead of its thorns. Her thorn now was Dolly's future. She had no great ambition, no schemes for this child of hers; she only wanted to feel sure that Dolly would be taken care of when she was gone, for she did n't feel sure that Dolly would take very good care of herself. She knew better than anybody what a little irresponsible vagabond this Dolly was. And Dolly knew that she knew, and without a word on Aunt Jo's part, Dolly knew by that sharp intuition of hers how Aunt Jo worried about her; and this worried Dolly; and this brings us up to the time when she had concluded to become better acquainted with Mr. Morris, with a vague view to Barbara's plans, and her own release from the ceaseless worry.

III.

The week that Mr. Ingalls always spent in New Orleans transacting some Southern business that he had, Dolly always spent with Mrs. Ingalls, to "keep her company," as women say. And one night of this week Mrs. Barbara had Mr. Morris there to tea; and then, directly after the hospitable meal, this arch plotter and planner announced that she was sent for to go round and see Mrs. Blake's little boy, who was down with the measles, — an errand of neighborly duty which could scarcely be deferred, and which she took upon herself with many apologies and regrets to Mr. Morris for her unavoidable absence during his visit. As she went

out of the room and upstairs after this flourish of trumpets Dolly followed her.

"Bab, what do you expect will become of you if you go on like this? You made that all up about Mrs. Blake's little boy, you know you did."

"Of course I did," returned Mrs. Bab in a little giggle. "I never do things by halves, and I hope I understand truth well enough to know how to romance when great occasions require it without damaging anybody. All stratagem is fair in love and war, you know."

Dolly tossed her head. "Love! Don't talk about that, Bab. We 're only considering a possible bargain!" and Dolly's air and tone were full of self-disdain.

Mrs. Barbara was alarmed. "What a goose you are, Dolly, to talk in that way about such a fine, handsome fellow as Herman Morris! A bargain! I think you insult him."

"So I do, Bab," spoke up Dolly, with quiet significance. But Mrs. Barbara was n't going to notice any of Dolly's heroics, so she kept up her fine indignation strain.

"A much better woman than you are might fall in love with Mr. Morris, I can tell you, Miss Dolly."

"Oh, I dare say."

"And jump at the chance of being his wife."

"I hope the better woman may have the chance to jump at, then. 'T would be a pity for me to interfere with such blissful possibilities."

And Dolly dropped a saucy little courtesy to Mrs. Barbara, whereat Mrs. Barbara laughed, relieved.

Dolly had got off her high horse. Dolly had come down from her heroics. She was not alarmed now. When Dolly began to jest she was in one of her safest moods. You could do something with Dolly then. It was only those high flights that took her away from controlling hands, from the practical ruts of life.

So in her jesting mood, thinking of that "better woman," Dolly went back to the parlor and to Mr. Herman Morris. A fine, handsome fellow, Mrs. Barbara had declared him. One gets an idea of height and breadth from this, and Mr. Morris was neither very tall nor very broad, nor the extreme reverse. He was one of the medium-sized men, with a good figure for his size, an elegant carriage, and a strikingly handsome face, brown-bearded and blue-eyed. He rose as Dolly entered, and came forward with a picture in his hand. It was a photograph of Dolly herself, which he had found upon the table.

"Do you like this of yourself?" he asked.

"That? Oh yes, better than anything I ever had taken. Why, don't you?"

"No, Miss Brooks, I can't say that I do."

Miss Brooks smiled. "Tell me why you don't like it," she asked; "it interests me to know."

His eyes went back to the picture. "The shadows are badly thrown, to begin with; there is too much shadow, and too much light. Then I don't think the position a happy one. I never saw an expression like that upon your face. In short, Miss Brooks, I don't think the picture does you justice, seriously."

Dolly bowed and smiled again.

"Now, here is what I call a good picture of a person." It was a *carte* of Mrs. Ingalls, one of those smooth, even pictures which the majority of people admire.

"You don't like it?" said Mr. Morris, looking up, as Dolly said nothing.

"I don't *dislike* it; I don't care for it — that is all."

"What is there in it that you criticise?" And Mr. Morris looked hard at the picture and then hard at Dolly, in an evident puzzle.

"It 's what there is n't in it that I find fault with — there 's the trouble. There 's nothing in it, to my thinking, — not a bit of soul. Barbara might as well be Bridget Dolan."

Mr. Morris bowed politely.

"Intimate friends," he said, "are rarely satisfied with their friends' pictures, I know. Now to me this seems a very satisfactory likeness. I think most people would find it so."

"Oh yes, I dare say."

Mr. Morris said a few words further in the matter, and then, putting the *carte* down, he leaned forward with an earnest intentness that rather startled his companion.

"Miss Brooks, I 've wanted an opportunity to say something in reference to a little conversation we had the last time I saw you. It 's troubled me a good deal."

Dolly could n't remember a thing that he had said to her the last time she had seen him. So she waited for him to go on.

"You don't remember. It was about Mr. Thornton. You asked me what I thought of him. I expressed myself very freely; and I have since thought that I was not charitable enough in my expressions."

"Oh yes, I recollect now; and if I recollect rightly, your expressions were very moderate, but quite just."

"I 'm glad you think so; but I 've been troubled ever since about it, and I really don't think I ought to have said what I did."

"You told me the real state of your mind, I suppose, and you told me facts."

"Yes, oh yes," answered Mr. Morris, evidently in a difficulty how to reconcile his sensitive conscience and these facts. "But," resuming, "I don't think I ought to have said so much even if I did believe it to be truth; for I may be mistaken, you know."

"You are not afraid of my making mischief, Mr. Morris?"

"Oh no, no; it 's entirely with myself. I dislike to think I 've been uncharitable, that 's all."

"I believe you said that you thought Mr. Thornton was rather conceited, and overestimated his abilities. I coincided with you; and then we talked of what grew out of these tendencies, and you told me of an incident where he got himself into a false position with the Herveys, through his vanity; and I told you of a little personal experience which corroborated all this. Neither you nor I had been slandering anybody. We had simply stated some facts, and compared notes, that we might come to a candid conclusion about a person of whom it is necessary for us to know something, as we

are likely to meet him rather frequently in society, and might, if we did n't understand his peculiarities, get into difficulties ourselves, by believing his assertions too implicitly, or trusting him inadvertently. Forewarned is forearmed, and I think I shall be on my guard when I 'm in the society of Mr. Charley Thornton hereafter."

This was a plain statement, certainly; but Mr. Morris still seemed unsettled.

"After all, we might be mistaken," he went on. "I hate to think ill or judge hardly. We should be so careful in our judgments. We cannot always understand another's motives; and what seems very dark to us may have a better meaning."

"No doubt about that, Mr. Morris; but there can be scarcely two meanings to a man's conduct who declares that such a girl as Josephine Hervey encouraged his attentions, and that the only reason he did n't go on was because he himself was not sufficiently interested; and that, when all the time Josephine was engaged to another — to such another as Jim Lawrence."

"Yes, yes, I know, but — "

A look of impatience crossed Dolly's face.

"I tell you what, Mr. Morris," she interrupted, "I think you 're a little morbid in your conscience. Charley Thornton is n't worth so much thought and breath, any way. I *know* he 's what we declared him to be, and I 've simply got him settled in his proper place now, — put away on a shelf, labelled 'dangerous,' and I don't trouble myself any more about him. Dismiss him from your mind in the same manner, Mr. Morris."

"And it does n't disturb you to find a person can be really false through his weakness?"

"Disturb me! Well, I long ago accepted that fact of human fallibility, and unless the person is very much to me individually I don't allow it to disturb me much. In this case I 've only opened another of the world's oysters, and found a pebble instead of a pearl. I 've got used to such findings, and I can't afford to go into mourning over every one; and there *are* pure pearls somewhere, you know, after all. But come, let us send Charley Thornton to Coventry or any other oblivion, and let me sing you a new song I have, — one new to me."

It was Story's significant words, "I am weary with rowing," and Boott's perfect music, which expresses what the words fail to express.

Dolly's voice was a *mezzo-soprano*, wild and untaught; but somebody said once of it, "I don't see how that girl manages to put so much into that voice of hers." Well, she sung this song, which has a heart-break in it, and into her voice went all the heart-break which had been written there; and gay as she seemed, Dolly-felt the heart-break, for Dolly herself was "weary with rowing." She turned slowly after the singing. The words, the music, were still with her.

"That is very sweet, but too sad for you, — too sad for anybody, Miss Brooks. We need something to cheer us in our recreations, I think."

Miss Brooks gave a little movement of her head which might have been of assent; and by that time Mr. Morris had a song before her of his own choosing. It was "The Merry Zingara." As she concluded this, Mrs. Ingalls came in.

"How is Mrs. Blake's little boy?" asked Dolly, wheeling round upon the piano-stool, her face expressing mischief.

"More comfortable, I thank you," answered Mrs. Bab, her bright eyes twinkling.

"Did you get there as soon as she expected you?"

Dolly was waxing dangerous. There was no knowing how she might have gone on, but that Mr. Morris, finding that it was after ten, made his adieux. The hall-door had no sooner closed upon him than Mrs. Barbara turned upon Dolly.

"Dolly, I 'll pay you for that last. I like to have broken down entirely; but I 'll postpone my revenge while you tell me about your evening. What do you think of him?"

"The first question answered will answer your other question. I 'll give you a history of the evening."

Whereupon Dolly, to begin with, repeated the photograph conversation.

"He did n't like this, eh?" and Barbara lifted Dolly's *carte* to view.

"No, he did n't see it, Bab dear, at all: he saw too much light, too much shadow; he did n't see that for once the sun had caught the very depths of a human soul. All the best that is in me is brought out there, Bab. He missed the outside sparkle, the color: that 's all he sees, or would ever see. And, Bab, he liked this of yours — thought it the perfection of likenesses."

"That thing, that lump of flesh without a soul!" cried Mrs. Bab.

Then, with a silent grimace, she tossed it from her, and told Dolly to go on. Dolly went on, and rendered with dramatic fidelity what followed. And at the end she said, "There, it is n't necessary for me to tell you what I think of Mr. Morris now."

Mrs. Barbara laughed. "Yes, tell me. I like to hear you talk, and you 're full of it, I can see."

Dolly joined the laugh. Then, suddenly turning grave, —

"Well, I can tell you one thing, to begin with. I thought in the midst of the conversation this evening of something Miss Thackeray says in her story of 'Jack the Giant-Killer.' It is where poor Jack sits and listens to his wife's little tunes, and it came over him that he had got to listen all his life to those little tunes. Well, it came over me just the same as I sat there listening to Mr. Morris: it came over me that if I married this man I should have to listen to little tunes all my life. I don't mean anything harsh or invidious in any way. I think Mr. Morris is an excellent man, and I respect him. He is kind and gentle and gentlemanly, but he lacks masculinity. I don't scoff at goodness by any means; but his goodness is feminine goodness, and not masculine. Think of a man harping upon such a quibble of conscientiousness, and making a great matter out of so small a one, when there are so many really great matters in the world to concern one's self about. All this blessed evening spent in such pottering talk. Little tunes! That is just the expression. Suppose he had — which he had n't — criticised unjustly or severely, it was only necessary for him to retract it briefly; but to

harp on the matter so long was making both himself and the matter of too much importance. It is very curious, that habit that some persons have — really modest persons too — of bringing the little worries of their consciences before you. They fancy that confession is going to give them some sort of absolution. Confession! Don't you remember what I was reading the other day from Holbeach: 'The weak — those who must, even if they die for it, have the sympathy of the majority — commonly confess: the strong hold their tongues and hold their own'? I wanted to say to Mr. Morris, when he was going over and over this small worry of his, 'Don't fret your immortal soul about the accidents and blunders and trifles of daily life; but go your ways with a high serenity and faith in yourself, and the accidents and blunders and trifles will by and by adjust themselves to the larger sphere that you create.' There, I read that somewhere, I don't know where."

"You made it up for the occasion, Dolly; it's one of your manufactured quotations, I know."

"Is it? Well, I'm glad you think so." A moment's silence, then, with an indescribable, long-drawn intonation, an indescribable light coming into her eyes: "How different all this was from another man's, 'The heavens are large, I don't notice small clouds'!"

"Eh, what is that?"

"You know, Bab — you've heard me speak of it before. It was Roy Dallas's answer to me one evening when I asked him if he noticed Mrs. Stamford's coolness to him. I shall never forget that answer, it was so characteristic of the man's nature. 'No, I hadn't no-

ticed it,' he replied, half smiling. 'But now you mention it, I perceive that there was a difference, perhaps; but the heavens are large, I don't notice small clouds.' That was just as indicative of his large, self-poised nature as Herman Morris's small worries are indicative of his nature."

"Dolly, I beg your pardon!" suddenly burst out Mrs. Barbara.

"For what?" laughed Dolly, looking a little amazed.

"For trying to make a match between you and Herman Morris. I see now what a blunderer I was. But, Doll dear, I hate to think of your drudging along alone to the end of your life."

"Alone! Bab, I never felt so alone in my life as I did when Herman Morris was talking to me to-night, — good and kind gentleman that he is."

"Yes, good and kind gentleman; but he is n't enough of a person for you, that 's it, Doll. You 're more of a man than he is, for all you 're such a soft little duck of a girl, with your pretty hair and your dainty ways."

"O Bab, don't call me a man-woman!"

"I 'm not calling you a man-woman. You don't call Shirley a man-woman, do you — Jane Eyre's Shirley? You 're like her in some ways; the cool, clear ways you look at things, without pottering, you know. As for the masculine element, somebody — some high light of literature — says that no man is complete in his nature without something of the feminine element, and no woman without the masculine. I think that is true. It means just the tempering of each nature — one, the masculine, by softness; the other, the feminine, by

strength. Without this element in each, there is hardness on the one side and weakness on the other."

"Yes, I believe that," said Dolly thoughtfully. "I never knew so gentle a person in some ways as Roy Dallas; and what a masculine man he was — a man's man!"

"Dolly, you measure all men by him; did you know it?"

"Yes, I know it," answered Dolly.

"That is the reason you are single to this day, Dolly."

"How you speak of that fact, as if it were a great misfortune, Bab!"

"Well, it is in some directions, for you, dear. I see it is of no use for you to marry a man that is n't equal to you; but I wish you *could* marry a man you loved, Dolly dear, you 're such a child after all in that part of your character which must cope with the world's practical forces. It hurts you so to shirk for yourself. As the world stands now, a woman like you has n't an easy time of it. You ought to be taken care of, looked out for, Dolly."

"Well, once for all, Bab, this cowardly way of trying to do violence to nature, of making a bargain of marriage to evade work and loneliness, is something I shall never contemplate again. Aunt Jo says often, 'Those who help themselves the Lord will help.' Now, I 'm going to set myself to my work, and do it as well as I can; and I trust that the Lord will not leave me desolate in the years that are to come, even if I miss the companion and the home you want me to have. Why,

bless your heart, Bab, I may not live to pass the lonely life you dread for me. Why, a thousand things may happen before that"; and Dolly rose up as brightly as if she had suddenly seen a very cheerful prospect open before her.

Mrs. Barbara laughed. "You are such a jolly, odd little thing, Dolly. But — my!" — looking at her watch — "it 's nearly twelve o'clock!" and up she sprang and began to put the music away.

"Oh, this is what you were singing when I came in, — this 'Weary with Rowing.' How did Mr. Morris like it, Dolly?"

Dolly told her how he liked it.

"The old woman!" cried Barbara impatiently. She had more than gone over to Dolly's side, this arch plotter and match-maker.

"No, no, Bab, not that: he is n't what you mean by that, he is n't a travesty upon nature; he is a kind, true person, only not in our key, or in the key of those men who are very strongly masculine."

"I say he 's an old woman!" repeated Barbara, now utterly demoralized. "This last imbecility proves it. To think of any one who can tell one tune from another listening to this impassioned heart-break, and then commence prosing about the duty of liveliness! He 's worse than an imbecile old woman; he has n't any soul. Now I hate those sentimental misses who prate about plaintive music, and immediately instance 'My heart is dead,' or some such dreary trash. That 's a very different thing from that uplifting straight into heaven on some impassioned strains that come from the very depths of human experience."

"Oh yes, yes it is, indeed!" cried Dolly, with a sort of ecstatic expression coming into her face.

Dolly was thinking of a voice that used to sing to her, uplifting *her* soul straight to heaven on its impassioned strains, — a voice that even in comedy vibrated with that deep minor chord which can come only from deep natures. As Mrs. Barbara caught that ecstatic expression on Dolly's face she knew where Dolly's thoughts had gone.

"Dolly," she began, rather hesitatingly, "I thought you had got over that affair."

"And forgotten Roy Dallas?" concluded Dolly, with a tinge of bitterness.

"Well, yes, I hoped you had, Dolly, or, at least, that he had ceased to be of such vital interest to you."

"Roy Dallas is n't such an easy person to forget or to dismiss from one's mind as a vital interest," returned Dolly, gazing wistfully before her, with eyes that showed plainly that they were recalling the past.

"But I thought — "

"Yes; I don't wonder you thought that was all forgotten, if I could enter into your plans, and contemplate even for a moment replacing Roy Dallas with Herman Morris. Oh, I don't wonder, Barbara, at you! I only wonder at myself. But let me tell you now just how I feel about that. Long ago I gave Roy Dallas up. It was a great wrench then, as you know, and for a long time the wound it made in my life was fresh, and bleeding at every touch. But gradually time, and all the duties and cares and various conditions it brings in its train, began to overlay very mercifully this past, un-

til I can really feel now that the wound is healed, and that Roy Dallas is only a memory, and not a hurt to me, — a blessed memory, which has enriched me, Barbara. I thought at first that I should never feel like this, that he could never be far away in my mind; but God does not mean us to give up life and die if we cannot have the one thing that we have set our hearts upon. So I lived on, and found at last, as I say, that my wound had become, instead of a fever and a pain, a blessed memory, and that there might be other interests left for me yet. Latterly, too, I 've felt lonely, and a little afraid of a lonelier future, and so I fell in with your plan. I thought, you see," — a little faint smile came here, — " that I might ' drive liking to the name of love,' but, having known love, I found I could not do it. I don't mean by this that I think I can never love again; none of us can tell what may come to us, or what fresh springs yet lie untouched within us, but I will never contemplate marrying for any other consideration again. Having known such a love, how can I, Barbara? "

" I see how it is, Dolly dear; but it is just as I said, is n't it? You measure all men by him? "

" I suppose I do; but how can I help it? We must always make comparisons by what is foregone in our experiences in every matter."

" O Dolly, there are few men whom you could compare with Roy Dallas, if you wait for that," burst out Mrs. Ingalls unguardedly.

The blood leaped to Dolly's cheek. " Ah, you know that too, Barbara! Then I must still wait, as you call it."

Mrs. Barbara could have bitten her tongue out for her outburst.

"But, Dolly," she began again, "I only meant — "

"Yes, I know, Barbara, all you would say; you have done me no harm. I 'm aware of what he was; but we will not do others injustice. There are others, no doubt, who will bear the comparison, who are more than he. I simply say this for justice. I have no idea of waiting, as you say. I 'm going to work in good earnest, and leave the end to God."

"Dolly, it 's nearly one o'clock; but before we go to bed, and now we 're on this topic, I want to ask a question or two. I want you to tell me first how it came about that Roy Dallas acted so suddenly at the last. When the affair was fresh I never liked to ask you anything, and later I thought I had better not, you know."

IV.

Dolly lifted her dark eyes, darker now than their wont, and full of the shadows of the past. The gay little girl who sat winking and blinking on a certain midnight a week ago — winking and blinking and talking nonsense to Major — was lost now in this pale-cheeked, serious maiden.

"You knew the beginning, Barbara, did n't you, all about that foolish, foolish quarrel with Major Lamsden?"

"No, not all."

"Poor silly thing, I was vain and elated because I thought that Roy Dallas was jealous. He had been so free from it before, — so like a king, like his name Royal, amidst the rest of the men who were fluttering about that winter. I did n't know enough then to know that it was because he was a king in his nature, so large and self-poised that he felt sure of his own. So when he warned me of Major Lamsden, told me that he did n't like for me to dance with him or be upon friendly terms with him, I was mean enough to think it was jealousy, and was flattered and elate, and would not heed even when he told me what an unsuitable person Major Lamsden was for any woman's companion; how he had no respect for, and no belief in, any woman, and how he entertained his boon companions with his conquests and his criticisms. No, I put this all down to the mad passion of jealousy on Roy's part, and so kept on my way. I wonder now he bore with me as long as he did. I wonder he had any faith in me when he saw me night after night whirling round in that man's arms. Of course he misunderstood me too, but his misunderstanding was not so unworthy as mine; he could not see that I was simply a foolish, ignorant child; that Major Lamsden was only an instrument in my hands to prove my power over another and another's love. And so he came to think at length that I was gratified by the attentions themselves; that Major Lamsden himself was pleasing to me; that I was actually so light-natured as to like this man's attentions for vanity's sake, and Heaven knows what other unworthy reason; and I don't won-

der, I don't wonder! Men know so much and women so little of other men's lives that it is never easy for them to realize how a woman may through ignorance accept attentions and admiration that they know to be insults. Well, things came at last to a crisis. I had been more reckless than usual one evening, and at the end Roy approached me with a set, stern face of anger. He said very little, but his words were stinging and bitter. They told me with terrible distinctness in what light he regarded my conduct. I was so horribly stung I thought I hated him for that moment, and flung back his words with interest. In a few minutes more it was all over between us, and I was going down the room with a dizzy sense of miserable triumph. Then followed more blunders. I held on my way, and before the winter was out I had the satisfaction of seeing Roy entrapped by Ellinor Marsh. O Barbara, if women do not know men, neither do men know women! Here was I, ignorant, deceived, and wilful, but honest and true and pure-hearted, spite of all; and there was Ellinor Marsh, whom all *women* knew to be deceitful and ambitious and crafty, and neither honest, true, nor pure-hearted; and see how she won and I lost. Oh, how bitter I grew! He did well to talk to me of Major Lamsden, I said savagely.

"Well, in June they were married; and it was in June — I shall never forget it, not a week after this marriage — that my eyes were opened, and I saw the meaning and the truth of everything. It was Harry Jerauld who did this kindness for me. I had kept on in the same manner with Major Lamsden; he was like Elli-

nor Marsh in one thing: he could seem anything he chose, and he seemed to me a gentleman. But Harry came to me one day, and said he had something to tell me — something he thought he ought to tell me. And, Barbara, he told me, with the color rising in his fresh young face, how Major Lamsden had spoken of me the night before at a gentleman's party, in that light and sneering way that Roy had warned me of. He had taken up, Barbara, the simplest and most innocent jesting that had passed between us, and spoken of it, and of me, in that idle, insinuating manner which had turned me and my words into a hateful travesty of the reality; made me out 'fast,' Barbara, when I was only striving to be gay, and to cover the trouble that I thought sometimes would kill me. And you know what my gayety is, dear, even at its most reckless height; you know I never could deserve that wretched unwomanly reputation."

"Oh!" Barbara gave this ejaculation fiercely, and then gathering herself up, girding herself, went on: "I know one thing, Dolly, that there *are* men, yes, and women, who deserve some punishment which has never yet been conceived. I don't believe in hell, you know, as a general thing; but I do believe that there *is* a place where these evil-minded, slimy-mouthed wretches will get their deserts, and perhaps get their redemption and purification at the same time."

At any other moment Dolly would have laughed at this characteristic *Barbarism*, which did n't believe in hell as a general thing, but only on special occasions.

Now, however, the past held her; and, scarcely noticing the interruption, she went on with her story.

"Before Harry left me he laid bare this man's character, and, unblinded by passion, I could believe of Harry what I would not of Roy. Then how awfully clear everything became to me! I could see now how Roy, knowing the truth as Harry did, must have been no less amazed than angered at my disregard of his words. Don't you see how he must have misunderstood me; and not only that, but how humiliated and embittered he must have been? Oh, I can see now, Barbara, how utterly mad I drove him; and in this madness he married Ellinor Marsh. It is five years ago, Barbara, but it seems three times that; I feel so changed and old when I think of it."

"But, Dolly, did he never know how he had misunderstood you?"

"Ah, Barbara, there is the sting to this day. I cannot tell; I have never seen him from that time. He lives abroad, you know; he is the Paris partner of the firm."

"I would have written him; I would have sent him word, and told him all!" cried out impulsive Barbara.

"Oh no, you would n't, Barbara; you would n't have written to Ellinor Marsh's husband."

And impulsive Barbara cried out again, "O Dolly, it was weak of him to rush off in that reckless way into a marriage with Ellinor Marsh!"

"Yes, it was a masculine weakness, — one of those rash acts that strong men now and then curse their lives with. I think when a strong man like Roy Dallas

loses himself for a moment, the result is ten times as disastrous as the mistakes of a lesser man."

"Well, I 'm glad of it," cried Barbara spitefully. "I 'm glad the great blundering creatures do get themselves into trouble. They worry us enough to deserve almost anything!"

And here Dolly's sense of humor came back to her at this irrelevant turn of Barbara's sympathy, and she laughed outright.

"O Barbara," she cried, "you are so deliciously inconsequent sometimes."

"Well, I 'm glad I am," laughed Barbara back again. "Now we shall go to bed in smiles instead of tears. You look like my dear little yellow-haired Dolly now. A minute ago your face was so pinched and your eyes so hollow I did n't know you."

"One laugh, like a bucket of water, washes away all the past. How deep you must think me, Bab!" satirically.

"I know how much your laugh goes for. I 've seen you and your kind before. You don't make much fuss, and you can see the funny side always; but while you see it your skeleton is rattling his bones somewhere out of sight. I should have some hopes of your marrying one of the five hundred good Mr. Morrises, and ending your life fat and comfortable, if you were n't of this kind, — if you cried your eyes out once in a while, like any other rational girl. But there! it 's two o'clock. Go to bed; find the stairs now before I turn the gas down. The bedrooms are lighted; you 'll see."

V.

It will show how wise Mrs. Barbara was in her estimates when I state that for the rest of Dolly's visit that young woman said no more about Roy Dallas. Down, down, into that deep well of hers she dropped the dead past and the dead lover. The waters above reflected all the bright things that passed, and people said, "What a gay creature Dolly Brooks is! How I wish I had her spirits!" etc. They never suspected the dead past and the dead lover lying out of sight under all that brightness. They never suspected that while Dolly laughed and jested, and made herself generally agreeable to all the Mr. Morrises, and the rest of his sex, with that natural vivacity of hers, that she was comparing every one of them with that dead lover, — a comparison by which the Mr. Morrises and the rest of his sex invariably lost in her view.

She had said truly, however, when she declared that her wound was no longer a stinging pain, but a blessed memory. So Roy Dallas himself was no longer a living reality, but a memory. He was set in the frame of her mind like a portrait. Looking back upon this portrait, this Saul among men, with his strong, masculine traits, it was not strange if she should involuntarily measure all new-comers by this standard. Her tastes had been educated, you see. Having looked upon the king, it was difficult to find excellence beneath him. Having listened to David's harp, how could she have patience with "little tunes"?

But after her week's holiday with Barbara, Dolly resolutely put her dreams and her memories away, and went back to her painting in good earnest, losing herself, or trying diligently to lose herself, in her work. She had at last set up a little studio, as some of her believing and admiring friends had long entreated her to do. Here she brought forth the studies of summer days, — hints of sea, and sky, and shore; of fishermen in swart groups mending their nets in the shadow of rocks, or scudding out in shallow boats across the lapping tide with all sails set; of field and meadow, and open farm-doors, glimpsing ruddy hearth-fires within, and sunburned lads and lassies clustered without; of mountain-gaps with lakes like gems, or sun-kissed, radiant heights bathed in royal raiment of purple mist. These were some of the suggestions that she had brought with her from time to time from her summer haunts. They had been lying idly in her portfolio, waiting for the days when inclination spurred her to the task of elaboration. Those days had come, it seemed; for gradually, as the spring advanced, her room began to show evidence of her industry. Here and there the sea flashed and foamed in refreshing mimicry of reality, and the swart fishermen laughed up at you from under bent brims while they mended their nets; or tanned sweet faces of lad and lassie glimmered beneath low-spreading branches; or the purple, misty mountains seemed to beckon you to their cool heights.

One of these well hung at an artist's reception, another placed in a popular picture-dealer's window, got much talked about, and presently, as the best result

of such talking, were sold at good prices. Then came the long summer days again, when the little studio was closed and the little artist was away again in summer haunts, gathering other hints of sea and shore, of meadow, mountain, and lake. She went back to the city this time with great hopes of herself.

"I 'll do better yet this autumn," she said cheerily.

But even when we have laid down our idleness and put our shoulders to the wheel, everything does not move forward at the pace we planned.

So now, while Dolly planned, and was so sure of her planning, her plans were all delayed, and other work was given her to do. Instead of painting out those hints of summer, she was bending over Aunt Jo's sick-bed; her only companion in this sorrowful time the great gray cat, Major. It was n't the delay of her work that tried Dolly: it was the anxiety, the lonesome, uncomforted fear, that nobody could appreciate but herself, for nobody quite knew what Aunt Jo and Dolly were to each other. She had no intimate friend but Barbara, and Barbara was away. Acquaintances she had plenty, — what the world calls friends: but we have yet to make that word synonymous with its real meaning, — service; we have yet to develop that capacity for human brotherhood and sisterhood which Christ came on earth to show us the beauty of.

So, all alone, then, as most of us are in our great trials, Dolly went about her daily tasks. But one day, when a sort of bitter despair seized upon her, one day when she had said to herself, "Has the Lord, too, forsaken me?" a friend suddenly appeared to her. It was

Herman Morris. He had but just come back to the city, he told her, and had just heard of her aunt's illness, and he came at once to see if he could be of any service to her; for he knew how lonely she must be, with her friend, Mrs. Ingalls, away. His kind, frank sincerity, his goodness, was so apparent to Dolly, that she had much ado to keep the tears from coming, — to keep from making a fool of herself, she told Mrs. Barbara afterward.

Certainly Herman Morris had never appeared to such advantage as now, and justly so. He was kind, and sincere in his kindness, — one of the people who appear so at home in household life with its small but important details. He seemed to anticipate Dolly's wants. There were letters to mail, the doctor's prescriptions to carry to the druggist's, — a thousand and one items for performance of which Dolly had been obliged to rely upon various unreliable errand-boys. Besides the necessary details there were thoughtful, gracious offices of courtesy. Flowers, when flowers were late and rare; fruits in their early freshness and lustre, — great golden grapes, with the dew white upon them; and peaches, yet warm from the sun's kisses. Aunt Jo's pale face began to brighten, and her eyes to lose something of that weary, worried look. Dolly knew why; she knew that it was not for these personal luxuries that Aunt Jo was mending, but for the suggestion of future caretaking and protection for her darling. This was what was lifting the load from Aunt Jo's shoulders, was taking the worry and the weariness from her eyes, and helping her to get well. Dolly thought of what Barbara had said: "Aunt Jo will be sure to like Mr. Morris."

And Mr. Morris was worthy of any one's liking — of loving, indeed; for how kind, how good, how tender he was! All very well to talk in health of relying upon one's self, — in high moments, when trial and trouble is out of sight, to hold forth in that self-confident manner she had used with Barbara. No person could combine everything; and what could be more needful, more lovable, in the long-run of actual life, than the qualities that Mr. Morris had disclosed?

This was the way Dolly talked to herself now. Dolly had been through various dangers, — had had her great and small temptations; but I don't think she had ever been in such deadly peril as at present. It was the old peril whereon so many women have been shipwrecked, — that peril of endeavoring to "drive liking to the name of love," of endeavoring to persuade one's self that love is a persuadable emotion; that gratitude and the recognition and approval of fine moral qualities are the safest foundations for union; that this gratitude and these qualities will beget love indeed. Henry Holbeach, the English essayist, says: "Now, what in Heaven's name has the 'bloom of young desire and the purple light of love' to do with gratitude?" What, indeed? High moral qualities are certainly desirable and necessary in a marriage union; but without that natural, indefinable drawing together, that subtile attraction which is the forerunner of the "purple light," if not the light itself, all the high moral qualities in the world will not avail to make a marriage the divine covenant of soul and body which it is meant to be. There are different chemical properties, equally pure and fine in themselves,

which will never combine; so two opposite souls, cast in different moulds, will not — because they are not meant to — harmonize.

Dolly, who was philosopher enough to have solved all this problem long ago, was yet at this crisis so thrown off her usual healthy mental balance by the depressing circumstances which encompassed her that she could scarcely be called in a normal condition. But it is in these abnormal conditions that persons oftenest wreck their lives. So Dolly now was going in a headlong manner to wreck hers.

VI.

It is a dark, soft, still, rainy evening, — one of those evenings when one feels the need of human companionship, if ever; and Dolly sits in the little parlor and listens to Aunt Jo's light breathing in the room beyond, and waits for Mr. Morris's expected step. She has made up her mind, and tries to think that the flutter she is in is the glad flutter of eager expectation. So Dolly befools herself. Drip, drip, goes the rain without, and tick, tick, the little yellow-faced clock within. Major upon the hearth by the October wood-fire is furbishing himself up for company. Dolly has n't thought of that! Does she remember when she used to stand before the glass half an hour, trying to decide whether blue or apple-green breast-knots were the most becoming when Roy Dallas was to be her guest? But Dolly has nothing to do with the past now. She has done

with everything but the present, — the present and Herman Morris. And there he comes now down the pavement. He looks up and sees Dolly at the dimly lighted window, and raises his hat to her. As he enters her presence he feels, without knowing why, the atmosphere of her thought. He feels that she is nearer to him, and his hand lingers over hers, and he then and there makes up his mind to speak that very night, as Dolly has made up her mind to listen. What can save Dolly now? Nothing but a miracle. But are the thousand and one apparently small circumstances which come between us and any decisive action, which avert action, indeed, miracles? One of these small circumstances delays our projected pleasure: then we inveigh against it as accident, unkind fate. Again the circumstance stands in the way of a plan that would have destroyed us: then we thank Heaven, and speak of the interposition of Providence.

But to go back to Dolly.

The flutter she is in does not seem to abate with Mr. Morris's arrival. She takes up her little pocket sketch-book, and turns over the leaves to steady herself, to get relief from a growing embarrassment and trepidation. All the time Mr. Morris's eyes are following her movements. As her trepidation increases he seems to gain coolness and self-poise. As she turns and re-turns the leaves of the little book, he bends forward with a smile upon his face.

"Dolly!"

Dolly starts as if somebody had struck her at the new tone in his voice. It is the tone of a claim, of posses-

sion already. And he had never called her Dolly before ! As she starts her book drops. A little thing, but the brass clamps and clasps give it weight, and produce an explosive noise in falling. And at this noise Aunt Jo wakes from her slumber, and calls out in a quick, frightened voice from the room beyond.

" Dolly ! Dolly ! "

And Dolly springs up and obeys that call with the most lively alacrity. Aunt Jo had been dreaming, and the sudden awakening by the sudden noise had set her heart beating. If Dolly would hand her her bottle of smelling-salts from the window-seat, she should be all right in a moment. Dolly fumbles for the smelling-salts in the semi-darkness, and tips them out of the window, which is standing slightly open for air.

" But never mind, Aunt Jo ! " she cries out gayly. " I 'll run and get mine. I 've got a gorgeous one I never use, you know."

While Aunt Jo laments the destruction of her little old bottle, and wonders at Dolly's clumsiness, Dolly flies to her room. She turns over boxes and baskets and drawers in a vain search. Dolly's things have a way of getting lost, and Dolly has a very foolish way of losing them still more by her rummaging manner of hunting for them. Well, she gets things into an awful muss, and then she bethinks her of one more place ; it is the " catch-all," one of those pretty worsted-worked gimcracks which ladies potter over for weeks and weeks, and then hang up as a receptacle for dust mostly, and any other odds and ends that lie about. Dolly thrusts her hand in, and pulls out a quantity of rubbish, —

papers, bills, hair-pins, empty spools, and what not, — but no vinaigrette. Impatient, she unhooks the thing from the wall, and shakes it violently upside down upon the bed. Out rolls the bottle at last. But what else comes with it?

Somebody's picture. Whose can it be? Whose indeed? Whose eyes are those gazing straight back into hers? Whose strong, firm mouth is that, curving away like the Athenian Jove's above the square-cut chin? A look half of fright passes over Dolly's face. She forgets all about the vinaigrette as she lifts the photograph to nearer view, the photograph which she thought she had sent back five years ago with all other mementos and keepsakes. And how came it here, this photograph of Royal Dallas? By what strange oversight had she missed it five years since to find it now?

A look half of fright upon her face, for it seems to Dolly almost like a presence, — a presence which recalls her to herself, to that real self she has been trying to overcome, to put away, like a garment which hard times have made too costly for use. But now Dolly sees that the garment of her real nature, costly though it be in the wear and tear of the struggle of her present life, cannot be put away so easily. She sees that, by nature, and in the education of this nature by associations, Herman Morris and she are very far apart, and that to attempt to assimilate herself to him is to make a moral and a mental suicide. All this Dolly feels with a new sensation of freshness, a sudden rush of emotion and conviction, as she meets those photo-

graphed eyes, as she reviews that strong face once more. She sees with certainty now that it is only a man of this type that can at once strike soul and sense, blood and brain. "Not this man, not you, Roy Dallas," she says to herself, then and there, "for I have given you up; you are dead and buried to me — but of your kind."

A minute more and she goes back to Aunt Jo, to Mr. Morris, the same Dolly to all outward appearance that left them. But when she sits down before her guest again in the little parlor, all her embarrassment gone, all her old natural ease come back, kind, but with a little absent look in her eyes, — eyes that now meet his with a straight, unmoved steadiness, — Mr. Morris finds that he cannot speak just now, that the good minute has gone. He is disappointed, but he is not fanciful, so he does n't think anything is amiss. "Next time it will all come right," he says to himself. Dolly turns from the door as he bids her good-night, and draws a long breath of relief, as one does after a danger has passed by.

Whatever another may think, Dolly looked upon what had just occurred as a miracle, from Aunt Jo's call to the necessity which had sent her on that errand that had resulted in bringing her face to face with the most vital reality of her life, face to face with a truth that was to save her from lifelong falsehood. Is this what that pictured semblance of Roy Dallas had been in hiding all these years for? She had an odd feeling as if she had been haunted as she asked herself this question. It was a miracle from end to end, a mys-

terious interposition of Providence, was Dolly's winding up of the whole matter. "Not this man, not Roy Dallas," she had said then and there as she looked at his picture. Yet it is very certain that "this man," that Roy Dallas, was a central figure in her mind just now, that for the next few days his image, his very presence, seemed to be continually before her and with her. Under this tenacious spell a new possibility occurred to her as explanation. He might be dead or dying, and this was one of those singular impressions of memory that seem to have something clairvoyant in it. A cold fear clutched her heart at this. She had said that he was dead to her long ago; but the actual possibility affected her as actual things are apt to affect such temperaments. "Dead, dead, dead!" She said it over and over till the word tolled like a funeral bell in her ear.

In this time Aunt Jo was mending rapidly, and Mr. Morris still continued his visits. But he had found no opportunity to speak as he desired. Dolly was very far from him now. You might almost say that she had forgotten him, so occupied was her mind with one persistent thought.

VII.

At length there comes a day when she feels that she can endure the uncertainty of this thought no longer. If Harry Jerauld were in town he might be able to give her some definite intelligence, to tell her whether she was haunted by the dead or the living. She had lost

sight of Harry a good deal in these last few years; but she knew his office address, and it would be an easy matter to write and ask him to come and see her. She acted upon the impulse, and wrote at once. If it reached him she knew she might expect to see him at any moment. A fluttering pulse of expectation throbbed all day. At sunset she looked out upon the blue October sky, at the bluer glimpse of river and bay, at the reddening, yellowing maples in the square, and thought with a thrill that it was just such a night as this that she had waited for Roy Dallas for the last time. Perhaps it was this thought that increased that strained sense of expectancy that shook her with a nervous dread which seemed to her a presage of impending fate. "He is dead, Roy Dallas is dead; this is what is coming to me," she said aloud. And as she spoke the door-bell rang a quick, imperative summons. Ah, here was Harry Jerauld; now she would know the truth. Her heart beat and a mist swam before her eyes as she went forward to admit him. She opened the door with a welcome upon her lips, spite of her agitation, for it was very kind in him to be so prompt. She opened the door for Harry Jerauld. It was Roy Dallas who stood before her! Roy Dallas, or was it his ghost come from that world whence he had gone? A moment she stood, dazed and speechless, a thousand wild, confusing fancies whirling through her brain. A moment, and then a firm, manly voice was breaking the silence in the most ordinary of commonplaces. A moment more, and they two, with five years of mistake and misdoing, of bitter regret and anguish, between

them, were sitting before each other, exchanging civilities like the merest acquaintances. This was no ghostly visitor; but Dolly pinched herself to see if she were awake.

To meet Roy Dallas, the hero of the great tragedy of her life, in this manner seemed false and unnatural. But it was, after all, natural. The external forms of daily life obtain in the most critical moments; and interviews that we have planned in the heat of emotion would be impossible in first moments of meeting after estrangement and long absence. Besides, think of the gulf between them! Dolly thought of it, and asked coldly but gently for his wife. Then the ice of the gulf broke up.

"My wife — you don't know? Dolly, do you think I would come here if I had not come to ask your pardon for the wrong I did you in the past? And do you think I would come if I had not come free?"

"Your wife is dead?" she asked, trembling.

"No, not dead," with bitterness and shame and shrinking in his tone, "not dead. I thought you must have known. It 's a year-old story, worn and threadbare in some circles. Dolly, five years ago I misunderstood a woman whose heart and mind were pure gold. It was but consistent, on the other hand, that I should take the counterfeit for the real metal, in my masculine ignorance and blindness. I took the counterfeit, and I took with it my humiliation and my punishment; and I took it silently, and held my peace until I could hold it no longer, — until she who had borne my name and lived under my roof left both for

another. No, I have no wife," he suddenly concluded, with that swift abruptness which characterizes strong men sometimes in bitter moments.

There came a pause here which Dolly could not break. Her heart was in a great tumult; but she sat before him cold and white and still, like a marble image of the Dolly he had known. As he looked at her a heavy sigh tore up from his heart, and was smothered at his lips. His voice had changed a little from its strong tones when he spoke again.

"Dolly," he said, "I had no right to hope that you could forgive the insult I cast upon you by my misunderstanding. I insulted you by that, and by my marriage with Ellinor Marsh. But I very soon saw how I had blundered, — my madness was short-lived; for it was madness — sheer, unreasoning madness — that drove me out of myself."

"And I, too, Roy, — I blundered, too. I misjudged you as well," Dolly broke in eagerly. "I was so vain and foolish, you don't know; I put such a low motive for your feeling against Major Lamsden."

He shook his head, half smiling. "Yes, I know all that; but that was your very innocence, your ignorance of ill. I don't lay that up against you, Dolly."

The half smile was a quick, low laugh here, and Dolly caught her breath to hear it; it was so like the old-time Dallas, and so like the old time itself.

"But how did you find out the truth, Roy? How did you discover that I was ignorant and foolish, instead of wild and wicked?"

He laughed again. "How did I find out that you

were ignorant and foolish?" Then his face changed as he went on. "I had a long time to think, Dolly, — a long, miserable time, and a terrible opportunity to draw contrasts. It did not take me long to see how things were, however; and then Harry Jerauld told me of his conversation with you, which only confirmed my own conclusion."

"Ah, I 'm glad you had a true instinct of me before Harry Jerauld told you!" cried Dolly, with a brisk emphasis that was so like Dolly.

Roy Dallas brightened as he caught it. Perhaps he thought, as Dolly had thought, that it was so like the old-time Dolly, and so like the old time itself; for, with the work and worry of the past few weeks upon her, Dolly seemed a very subdued and saddened Dolly, like, yet unlike, the Dolly he had known, yet like nobody else in all the wide world.

"Did I kill her love for me five years ago, when I acted so like an outrageous brute toward her?" he questioned himself, looking at her wistfully.

"Did he come here to-night to absolve himself of a sin merely?" Dolly thought at the same time.

She was soon to find out what he came for. There was a little pause, a little space of silence, wherein Roy Dallas felt that he had come over the seas on a fruitless errand, wherein Dolly felt all sure foundations were slipping from beneath her feet, and then Dallas was breaking the silence, was telling her what had brought him to her door.

"It is just a fortnight to-night — it was the 15th of October, I remember, for I made a note of it — that, as

I sat writing letters in my room, my mind was suddenly withdrawn from my work, and reverted to you in the most inexplicable manner. I tell you frankly that I tried resolutely to banish all such thoughts, and turn to my letters. But it was of no use. At last, like St. John Rivers, I gave myself up for a brief time to what I could not resist. Pushing back my papers, I dropped my head into my hand, and yielded to my fancies. In a moment I had dropped asleep. And here you appeared to me more vividly than in waking. Dolly, I saw a room like this, and I saw you in it, but not alone. There was some one else present, some man whose face was turned from me; but I shuddered as I watched his bending head; for in his presence there seemed to be some fatal danger to you, — some threatened doom, which each moment made more imminent. I tried to call out to you, but my lips were dumb. And then I lost sight of you, to find you again elsewhere, — in some other apartment. You were moving about restlessly, in some hurried search, and you were now alone; but I felt that the danger still waited for you, — that it was only a matter of time, unless I could in some manner avert it. Again I tried to call, but with no success. I could make no sound, and the moments flew by; they seemed to me hurrying you to your destruction, and I was impotent to save. In the agony which this conviction brought to me I did what many a wretched man has done in extreme moments, when his own impotency has been made manifest to him, — I cried to God to save my darling, whom I could not save. Dolly, I never knew what it was to

feel the swaying and lifting of the soul by prayer before; but there in my dream I seemed to feel the arm of the Almighty, and to be lifted up out of myself and my fears. I woke with a strange sense of rest and relief, yet with an imperative need. I must come to America. I must see my darling, — my darling, whom I felt sure the Lord had saved from some deadly peril, — my darling, as this proves, in whose welfare my own is inextricably involved, even though she turn away from me."

He rose as he said these words, and came forward with the old flush across his cheeks, the old light in his eyes. And Dolly did not turn away from him. His darling indeed! Better than he she knew how involved their lives must be, — she who held the counterpart of this strange experience, which proved it a truth beyond human doubting as beyond human solving. Better than he she knew in that moment; but a moment later, listening to her story, he too knew how close the bond between them, and that he had come over the seas not upon a fruitless errand, but to claim his own, — his darling whom the Lord had saved.

VIII.

"But it 's uncanny — it makes me creep," commented Mrs. Barbara when she came home to hear the story. "It reminds me of the old Douglas couplet, —

> 'Through field and flood, by dyke and stone,
> The Douglas comes to claim his own.'

Roy Dallas belongs to the old Douglas clan, it is certain. But, Dolly, this Douglas of yours is not nearly so pleasant-tempered a person as Mr. Morris. Herman Morris would have smoothed out every wrinkle and brushed every pebble from your daily path. Roy Dallas will go straight over them, and never see them unless you cry out."

Dolly laughed exultantly.

"That 's the best of it, Barbara. 'The heavens are large,' you know; he does n't see small clouds. Ah, Bab, don't you see that 's part of the whole which I like so much? It 's a large nature, the real masculine nature, which does n't potter over details. If he stops to help me when I cry out over the wrinkles and the pebbles, what can I ask more?"

"You 're sure he 'll stop?"

"I 'm sure he 'll stop. It is the manliest men who are the tenderest always."

"So it is, you dear, wise little thing! Ah, Dolly, so wise to know yourself, and be brave enough to stand alone rather than take anything less than your very own! It 's a sermon, Dolly, the whole thing, — a sermon for all women, and" — here Mrs. Barbara's bright eyes twinkled — "a lesson to match-makers!"

DICK HALLIDAY'S WIFE.

"O RICHARD, I 'm so glad you 've come ! Where *have* you been ? "

Richard laughs, a small laugh, not of pleasure, as one might suppose, at these warm words of greeting from an uncommonly pretty woman, but a queer little laugh, perfectly good-natured, — Richard Halliday is seldom moved from this easy good-nature of his, — perfectly good-natured, but the kind of laugh that falls from a person's lips in involuntary recognition of a peculiarity.

" Well, you need n't laugh, Richard, for I 've been *so* nervous about you ! "

" I only laughed at your question, Lizzie, ' Where *have* you been ? ' It reminded me of a similar question in Dow's Flat, ' Where *hev* you been ? ' "

But if Mr. Richard Halliday thinks to turn his wife's attention from the point — *her* point — by this very flimsy remark, he is mistaken.

" I did n't say, ' Where *hev* you been,' Richard ; I 'm not so careless of my pronunciation as that, I hope " ; and Mrs. Richard tosses her head a little, entirely oblivious of her husband's humor. " But where *have* you been, Richard ? " she still persists.

"I 've been to the Mountains of the Moon, my dear; and, as I made a call at each of the smaller planets on my way home, I am a little late."

As Mr. Halliday delivers himself of this nonsense with great gravity, he stoops for a moment to unbuckle his overshoe, that movement bringing his head on a nearer level with Mrs. Halliday, who is of rather diminutive stature.

"Richard!" — sniff, sniff — "I smell" — sniff, sniff — "I smell brandy or whiskey, or some dreadful stuff! O Richard, you 've been with those horrid Raymonds at that hateful club!"

"I told you, my dear, I 'd been to the Mountains of the Moon. They 're always extremely hospitable and social up there, specially on cold nights; and it 's uncommonly nasty out to-night."

Mrs. Halliday remembers the story of the husband who returned one night somewhere in the small hours sufficiently sensible of his libations to endeavor to conceal his breath-betrayal by a generous use of cloves, but who betrayed his wandering wits at the last by replying to his wife's question concerning such an extraordinary pungency of odor, that he had *been to the Spice Islands*. Remembering this, Mrs. Halliday, who is quicker to take a suspicion than a joke, immediately fits the case of wandering wits to Mr. Halliday, whose wits never wandered under any conditions. As this new suspicion enters her mind, she starts back with the peach-bloom fast fading from her cheeks, and utters one exclamation: "O Richard!"

There is such a depth of pain in this exclamation

that her husband, for the first time since he has entered the room, looks at her seriously. His first impulse is to laugh, but he checks the impulse, and for a moment is silent; then, as he seats himself before the fire, he puts out his hand.

"Lizzie, come here." Lizzie obeys, and allows herself to be drawn, with a little, half-resentful protest, to her husband's knee. "My dear child, did you ever see a man in his cups — I mean a little drunk — *before to-night?*"

"No, never — that is, not near enough to tell."

The laugh that Richard Halliday has restrained now breaks out. Mrs. Halliday reddens with a consciousness of being ridiculed. She has n't the faintest sense of "the situation."

"Never near enough to tell, eh? I thought so, my dear, else you would have known that you had yet to make acquaintance with that interesting phenomenon, — a man a little drunk." The clear eyes that look into her eyes, the cool hand that holds her hand, and, more than all, a certain dry tone of the usually pleasant voice, — a caustic note which is not pain or anger, but a tone of assertion, quiet but derisive, — all these indications suddenly disclose to Mrs. Halliday the very foolish blunder she has made. Perhaps she never admires her easy-going husband so much as when he rouses himself sufficiently to assert himself in this masculine fashion. In a moment, then, she droops her small, bristling wings and is at his feet, in spirit; in reality, she hides her ashamed face against his waistcoat. Presently the waistcoat-wearer says: —

"Where 's the evening paper, Lizzie? I 'll look at it a moment, and then we 'll have a game of chess; it 's early yet, only half-past nine."

Only half-past nine! Mrs. Halliday reddens again, but this time out of shame-facedness; and this shame-facedness keeps her silent. The question of "Where *have* you been, Richard?" is not put again. The little lady sees she has made a foolish mess of it; that is, she sees that Richard thinks so, and, half angry, not exactly at herself, but at the world in general, and with a great sense of self-pity, she longs to weep a little weep upon her husband's shoulder, to say her small say of sorrow at her mistake, to promise all manner of lovely things for the future, while she wedges in a plaintive excuse for herself.

But Mr. Halliday has had so many "little weeps" on his shoulder, has heard so many promises of lovely things for the future which the future never fulfilled, that it is not strange, I suppose, that he should fail to encourage further demonstrations of this kind.

So the "little weep" goes off in a few long-drawn sighs against the waistcoat, and then the waistcoat-wearer is left to read his paper, which is never a very long operation with him, and then the game of chess follows. In the midst of this, Mr. Halliday suddenly says: "I met Kate to-day, and she wanted to know why we had n't been round lately. I told her we 'd drop in to-morrow night, perhaps."

If Dick Halliday had been looking at his wife's face he would have seen a ripple on its smooth surface. For ten days Mrs. Richard has been in the undisturbed, the

unshared possession of her husband's society. The ripple which passes over her face says very plainly : —

"Why should Dick want other society than mine? I don't want other society than his." But after a minute she replies : —

"Of course, Dick dear, if you would like to go, we 'll go."

It is, doubtless, impossible for Mrs. Richard to conceal the fact that she is simply acquiescing in her husband's request from a sense of duty merely; but Mr. Richard, either wise or unobservant, makes no comment, and the subject drops without any of that dangerous discussion which might have taken place if Mr. Richard had been of the same manner of mind as Mrs. Richard. To explain a little : the Kate of whom Dick speaks so familiarly is the wife of his Cousin Tom — Tom Halliday. Before there was any Mrs. Dick or Mrs. Tom — when it was Lizzie Harrison and Kate Lane — there had been a good deal of girlish intimacy; but since the two had become united a little closer by marriage the intimacy, instead of becoming closer, had rather subsided. People said that Mrs. Dick was very "domestic," and that Mrs. Tom was more given to the gayeties of life. Perhaps this was the reason of their seeing less of each other. Mrs. Dick had been heard to say several times since her marriage that she was afraid Kate was beginning wrong, that her ideas of a home were not the right ideas; which goes to show that, doubtless, there were very decided reasons on one side at least for the gradual decline of the intimacy. Going in the next evening to Mrs. Tom's parlor, Mrs.

Dick's "domestic" sense received a fresh shock. Instead of the gas being turned on to a bead in an upper burner and only the drop-light in operation, as was her own economical plan, two or three upper burners were in full blast in both back and front parlor, and Kate and Tom were enjoying themselves in their different ways: Kate at the piano practising one of Robert Franz's songs with a young gentleman who was not her husband, and the young gentleman who was her husband smoking his pipe over his newspaper. This was not Mrs. Dick's "way." Her way was to devote herself to Dick, to sit near him with some light evening work, while he read the news — to her as well as to himself. And, afterward, it was generally her plan to play two or three pieces on the piano; Kate Halliday, who was a genius at music, denominated them "little tunes," like those of Jack's wife in Miss Thackeray's story. And strict truth compels me to say that Dick usually went to sleep during this domestic music. They had been married now about five years. In the first year or two this little domestic programme was quite closely adhered to, but since that time Dick's business-calls had become so much more absorbing that the evenings had been very often intrenched upon to such an extent that both the newspaper reading and the music had become very hurried matters. But to return to Mrs. Tom and her different ways. She springs up, as she sees Mrs. Dick, with an outstretched hand and a cordial "How-de-do?" and the young man who is not her husband turns about and discloses the face of one of those Raymonds of Lizzie's detestation. Tom rises a

little less alertly than Kate, great fellow that he is, and comes forward, pipe in hand. His wife slips behind her visitors, and goes to making frantic and mysterious signs to her husband. But Tom is notoriously the dullest fellow in the world to take hints, however broad, and therefore overwhelms his wife with confusion presently by saying: —

"What are you winking at me so for, Kate? Is anything the matter with my clothes?"

"Stupid!" cries Kate at this, red and laughing and exasperated, as she runs up to him and seizes the great pipe that is smoking like a chimney.

And Tom, suddenly remembering, shouts out: —

"Bless my soul, it 's the pipe!—I always forget you don't like a pipe, Lizzie. And Kate read me a lecture not two hours ago on the subject. 'Mind,' she said, 'you put your pipe out when Lizzie comes.' And, I declare, I forgot all about it!"

Lizzie, of course, begs him not to put himself or his pipe out for her, and other civil speeches follow — polite lies *de société*, which end, of course, in the pipe's banishment.

"Does tobacco make you sick, Mrs. Halliday?" asks Jack Raymond, in his pleasant, interested way, at this crisis.

"Oh, no, not at all; it is disagreeable to me, I suppose, because I don't approve of it," Lizzie answers, with the air of a missionary enlightening the heathen.

Raymond looks at her a moment with a puzzled expression, as if a conundrum had been proposed, and, a moment after, he moved over to Mrs. Tom, as if he gave it up.

After this, the talk gets into divided channels, the gentlemen falling into politics, and the ladies soaring into the region of feminine high art — dress — which is the only region, Kate has been heard to declare, where Mrs. Dick does n't carry her principles, though Mrs. Dick, without doubt, would stoutly deny this charge, and perhaps be able to prove that careless Mrs. Tom entirely mistaken. But, however it may be, the talk goes on with animation until Jack Raymond breaks up the political discussion by taking his departure. Mrs. Tom laments this going greatly, and launches forth into voluble praises of the departed as the door closes.

"Nicest fellows in the world, those Raymond boys, both of 'em," declares Tom heartily.

"Are n't they rather — fast?" asks Mrs. Dick.

"I don't know. Are they, Tom?" responds Kate, —a response that shows a hardened indifference to morality, which is appalling to Mrs. Dick.

And then Tom: —

"Fast! No, not what I call fast. They 're bright boys, invited everywhere, and spend a good deal of money; but they 're honorable, upright fellows, gentlemen always, and with a good deal of judgment to keep the balance, I should say."

"They 're very nice, anyway," remarks Mrs. Tom here, with that careless optimism which distinguishes her.

"Mr. Marsh used to speak of them as fast," Mrs. Dick returns, with an air of one playing a trump card.

"Marsh!" ejaculates Tom Halliday, with great contempt. "Marsh is a prig, continually setting up his notions of propriety or morality as a standard."

"You don't know the Raymonds," interposes Mrs. Tom pleasantly; "if you did, you 'd be sure to like them." The scale of Mrs. Tom's judgment is generally a scale of more or less agreeability. Then, as if suddenly struck by a very bright thought, a suggestion which in the following out will settle the whole vexed question: "I 'll invite you all round to dinner together some day; there 's nothing like a social dinner for making people better acquainted."

"Thank you, I don't care to be better acquainted. I don't like men who belong to clubs," retorts Mrs. Richard, with calm decision. A very queer look passes over Tom Halliday's face.

Kate is beginning hastily: "Why, Lizzie, how can you say so when —" but is suddenly arrested from further speech by a warning glance from her husband. All this time Dick Halliday sits imperturbable, with the blandest expression of indifference to the whole subject upon his impassive countenance. And Mrs. Dick, who has caught neither the queer look nor the warning glance, pleases herself with the thought that her last remark has told. It has, indeed, but in a different direction from that which she so complacently suspects. Conversation flags after this, and, in the lull, the two visitors depart. Alone with her husband, Kate Halliday flings up her hands in expressive pantomime. Tom laughs.

"Well, Kate, that was what I call a pretty close shave. I never knew you blunder like that before."

"And I never knew myself blunder like that before; but the idea of her not knowing that Dick is a club-

man. It did not occur to me that she was ignorant; I thought her little speech was a snap at Dick. I should think Dick would be the last person to conceal anything. I must say, Tom, it looks rather cowardly in him."

"I think any man would be just such a coward, then. He doesn't want to be preached at all the time."

"How she does nag him!" cried Kate, half laughing.

"Nag him! I should think so. Kate, if you were like that woman, I'd get a divorce."

"I've no doubt you would, sir; you haven't the easy temper of your Cousin Dick. How you did fly at her about the Raymonds!"

"Fly at her! The little canting pussy-cat quoting that fool of a Marsh."

"But Lizzie is very good — really, Tom. Don't you remember how kind she was to me when I was sick, and how she nursed Dick through the varioloid last winter?"

"Yes, I remember; and I'm very much obliged to her, but if I were in Dick's place I shouldn't be. I should a great deal rather trust my chances in the next world than be nursed back to pass my life with *her*."

"But you're not Dick, sir."

"No, thank Heaven!"

While this talk is going on, Lizzie Halliday is quietly congratulating herself on the stand she has taken. And, as the season progresses, and she hears of dance-parties, euchre-clubs, and music-matinées, at the town-hall, with such men as the Raymonds for the principal figures,

she congratulates herself still more upon her "stand." And this stand is that of avoiding all this emptiness and folly, as she calls it, and the substitution of something solid and substantial, something that is intelligent and elevating,— pleasure and profit combined. In pursuance of this plan, she organizes a Shakespeare Society and a reading society. At the latter, the subject for discussion was given out at each meeting for the coming meeting, so that each person might be prepared. Tom Halliday hears of these elevating enjoyments, when the winter is nearly over, from one of the "members,"—a young girl rather of his wife's proclivities, but who has been pressed into Mrs. Dick Halliday's "evenings" by an aunt who is of Mrs. Dick Halliday's mental and moral kith and kin.

"And is Dick a regular attendant at these intellectual treats?" asks Tom.

"He comes in at the latter part of the evening. His business, he says, does not allow him the pleasure of coming earlier."

"His business?"

"Yes; Mrs. Halliday says he is very much devoted to his business"; and little Sally McClane turns up to Tom Halliday's face a very bright pair of eyes with a very keen expression in them.

"What does he do when he *is* there?" asks Tom.

"Do! Why, what do you suppose he does? He behaves himself like a gentleman, as he is."

"Oh! Does he read in the plays — Shakespeare, you know?" persists Tom.

"I 've never heard him."

"Does he talk in that conversation-bout?"

"Well, yes, he talks a little."

"Oh, he does! What are some of the subjects, Sally?"

"'The Pre-Adamite World' and 'The Mission of Man' are all I remember now."

"Sally, do you mean to tell me that Dick Halliday talks to those people about 'The Pre-Adamite World' and 'The Mission of Man'?"

"No, certainly not. I never said he talked to those people."

"Whom does he talk to, then?"

"Well, he talks — to me."

"Oh, he talks to you!" And Tom laughs so loud (he is on the street, walking with Sally) that the passers turn and look at him. "And what are my Cousin Dick's views on those abstruse subjects, Miss McClane?"

Sally laughs now, and then repeats certain witty and humorous remarks of Dick's in such good imitation of Dick Halliday's quiet manner that Tom laughs another loud laugh; and, going home, he tells Kate the whole story.

"The little cat!" cries Kate. "All the while she has been refusing our invitations, she has been engineering these headachy talks and things, and never gave us a chance at 'em! Why, Tom, she must consider us hopeless cases. But only to think of Dick there! *Do* you suppose, Tom, she is bringing him round to like such things?"

"Well, I should say, my dear, that there was about as much chance of bringing me round; but, lord! you never can tell what a woman will do with a man," Tom winds up, in a disgusted manner.

"And about the business, Tom, which absorbs him so?"

"I should say that was one of Dick's ways, one of his white lies. Dick, though, may enjoy himself more than we think. He has an enormous amount of humor, and the way he goes on to that little McClane girl shows that he is getting what he can out of it."

"But I wonder if that 's all he has? Where do they go? We scarcely ever see them at the theatre, and never in our old set at parties."

"He 's with men a good deal, I fancy. Oh, Dick 'll manage to amuse himself somehow, never fear," answers Tom carelessly.

And all the time Mrs. Dick is congratulating herself on the success of her plans. She is curing Dick of his idle, frivolous tastes by offering him something better. His business habits, too, are improving so much. She does feel a good deal disappointed that he cannot have the benefit of her "evenings"; but "business before pleasure; that is as it should be with a rising man," is her sage little conclusion. And so in this apparently satisfactory state things go on for the rest of the winter. Mrs. Tom Halliday, coming home one day from her spring shopping, speaks her mind about this state of satisfaction: —

"You never saw anything like it, Tom! That small woman thinks, I verily believe, that she has succeeded in plucking Dick like a brand from the burning, and has inducted him into the straight and narrow paths of virtue, — to wit, the company of that fossil old set where the discussion of the pre-Adamite world is considered

a great deal safer occupation than the society of the nineteenth-century man, who has to do with the world and the flesh, to say nothing of the devil. Just fancy Dick being led into such very narrow ways?"

"Some other woman ought to pay her out somehow!" exclaims Tom viciously, as he wrestles with a new tie before the mirror.

"Had n't I better get up a smart little flirtation with Dick for that laudable purpose?" cries Kate, laughing lightly.

And Tom responding in his careless, jovial way, they make merry over the matter after their fashion. Only a few months later with what different emotions do they both recall these jesting words!

This is March. At the end of May, as Lizzie Halliday is riding down-town in a horse-car, one of those garrulous women, who make all the mischief in the world pretty much, accosts her.

"How do you do, Mrs. Halliday? Have n't seen you for an age to speak with you, though I 've seen you driving with Mrs. Claymer lately several times, and I thought then that you might get time to return my call."

"Driving with Mrs. Claymer! You are mistaken, Mrs. Deane."

"Well, now, I declare! Do you mean to tell me that I did n't meet you last night — and, let 's see, Wednesday night, too? You did n't see me, but Mr. Halliday did, and raised his hat to me."

"What! Dick?"

"Why, of course; and you had on that very peculiar

gray-and-white shawl. Oh, I knew it was you, my dear, by your light hair, though you are so vain as to cover your complexion from these east winds by a blue veil. I told Louisa that I did n't know whether you meant to cut me or not."

"I 'm sure I did n't see you, Mrs. Deane," answers Lizzie, with great presence of mind, though the floor of the car seems to rise before her. Fortunately, Mrs. Deane arrives at this crisis at her destination, and Lizzie is left alone to face the situation. Dick — *her* husband — driving with Mrs. Claymer, and another lady, who is not his wife, despite the gray-and-white-striped shawl!

Mrs. Claymer is a fashionable woman, with a background of family and a prestige of wealth. She was one of Dick Halliday's bachelor acquaintances, and had exchanged calls once with his wife. Lizzie always speaks of her as "that very worldly Mrs. Claymer."

But the other person in the gray-and-white-striped shawl?

Going on and on in the car, Lizzie puzzles over this enigma in a little fire and fury of jealousy and mortification.

"What can it mean? Who can it be?" she queries.

All at once her mind clears. *Kate Halliday has the duplicate to her gray-and-white-striped shawl; has, too, light curling hair like her own!* That Kate, a few months back, did not know Mrs. Claymer, was nothing; Kate was always making new acquaintances. With this conclusion, which to Lizzie is a revelation, everything in the past seems to come back to her with a new meaning. She recalls all Dick's admiration of Kate.

She recalls, too, the business engagements which this recreant has pleaded for the last six months. And, as hour by hour goes by, as in the solitude of her own room she goes into every detail of the case, the dumb pain and confusion that at first assailed her give place to indignation and a desire to take swift reprisals.

While this turbulent caldron of trouble is brewing at the Dick Hallidays, at the Tom Hallidays the state of the atmosphere seems to be in its usual serene condition. Mrs. Tom, tired of her new novel, has dropped it in her accustomed careless fashion upon the floor, and stands at the window singing a little air, and waiting for Tom to come in to dinner; and, waiting for Tom, she sees Cousin Dick going by. It is a warm night in the latter part of May, and the window at which she stands is wide open. Dick stops a moment to chat.

"You 'd better come in," urges Kate. "We shall dine in two minutes — and *such* a salad! I made it myself."

Dick laughs, confesses the salad is a great temptation, but declines. At that point Tom comes swinging round the corner.

"Ah, there you are!" cries Mrs. Kate; "and here is Dick dying to taste my salad. Make him come in, Tom; he has n't been here for an age."

Dick, beginning to yield, says something about going home.

"But it is n't your dinner-hour, and half an hour later will do as well," urges Tom, who also vows it is an age since Dick has crossed their threshold.

The result is foreseen. Dick weakly yields, and enters the house, while his host innocently and trustingly gives him over to Mrs. Kate, and limps upstairs to relieve himself of a pair of tight boots.

It is at this moment that the servant ushers in another visitor.

"Such a bother!" begins Kate; "the soup will be spoiled." But the next moment she recognizes this visitor.

"Lizzie! How fortunate! Here we have just beguiled Dick in to eat a most wonderful salad of my making, and you 're just in time to join us. It 's an age since either of you have been here. Now, you need n't say a word. You 're going to take off your bonnet and stay"; and, on hospitable thought intent, Mrs. Tom steps forward to assist in the removal of the bonnet. But Lizzie Halliday's hand, Lizzie Halliday's voice, arrest this hospitality at once.

Kate looks at her with an expression of puzzled astonishment. What is that she is saying about Mrs. Claymer and a striped shawl? And who is it that has been a treacherous friend? From the wife Kate glances to the husband. She is startled at the change in Dick Halliday's placid face. The eyes that naturally droop a little on ordinary occasions are wide open enough now, and the pleasant-tempered, handsome mouth has got a straight, hard line in lieu of its usual smiling curves; and on his cheeks there is a spot of red that seems to concentrate and make more vivid the fire of the eye, and to emphasize the compression of the mouth. There is a little pause as Lizzie Halliday concludes her rash

speech; and then, in a particularly quiet, low-toned voice, Dick Halliday makes answer: —

"You are laboring under a mistake, Mrs. Halliday. The lady with whom I have been seen driving recently was not Kate, whatever may have been the resemblances. It was Mrs. Draysel, Mrs. Claymer's sister."

"Dick!" A tone of horror is in Lizzie Halliday's voice, a white dismay in her face.

"We will not discuss the matter here, if you please," he continues. "We have already to beg Kate's pardon for what has occurred, and after that I think we had better go."

When Tom comes down, a moment later, he finds to his amazement his wife alone and in hysterical tears. The salad waits, the soup gets stone-cold, while Kate recounts what has just taken place. At first Tom is furious at the insult to his wife; but, when Kate comes to the end, when she says, "Who *is* Mrs. Draysel, Tom? and why did Lizzie look so horror-struck at the mention of her name?" his brow relents, and he exclaims: —

"Good Heaven! she has got paid out. Do you remember Lizzie's brother George?"

"What! 'handsome George,' as we used to call him? Of course I do."

"Well, it was Mrs. Draysel and her husband who led him to his ruin. Jordan Draysel, after ruining himself, took to ruining other men for a living. His wife acts the part of the alluring spider — 'Will you walk into my parlor,' etc. And, as she is the original siren, there is generally no lack of victims at the little four-in-hand games in her drawing-room, — games which she would

innocently tell you were 'Jordan's euchre parties.' The only woman who believes in her is her sister, Mrs. Claymer; and it is the Claymer respectability that keeps the Draysels on the surface of society. They have been abroad for several years, and now are back, I suppose, at their old business."

"And, in trying to keep Dick from our mild dissipations, which have always come under the most rigid law of respectability, Lizzie has driven him into that trap!" cries Kate, a little spitefully. And presently, after a little pause: "Tom, I want to apologize to somebody for my injustice to Dick. I called him a coward once. I take it all back. I think his courage is positively chivalrous. Most men would have lied it out; vowed it was some Mrs. Smith or Jones or other, and left me to suffer from the lie; for Lizzie would have believed nothing less than this. She *knew* that this was truth."

"Yes, she knew that, from such an ease-loving fellow as Dick. But it 's pretty hard on Lizzie. She 's to be pitied, I must say."

"She!" Kate cries, with sudden, angry heat. "Well, I don't know. *I* pity Dick; for Lizzie, I believe it serves her right!"

Tom looks into the flushed face and laughs.

"Oh, you women, you women!" is his bantering comment.

"But to insult *me*, Tom, with such suspicions!"

"I know, Kate, but she is such a little fool; and she 's awfully hard hit now."

Kate muses a moment; and then, with renewed energy: "Tom, she 'll get the best of it yet. She 'll

come off in flying colors somehow before the year is out. You 'll see ! "

Before the year is out, it is no secret in society that Mrs. Dick Halliday is an injured and long-suffering woman. She is generally spoken of as " that poor little Mrs. Halliday." " Did everything, you know, for that worthless fellow, — tried to reform him and elevate him in all possible ways, and now sacrifices herself to him, bears everything with such patience, is such a devoted wife," etc., etc., etc.

There is a handful of people, Dick's few special friends, who make a different judgment. But what are these to the great multitude who applaud Lizzie Halliday as she goes about with that *resigned face* " which tells its own story, you know," who crown her as a model wife, while they turn their backs upon " that worthless fellow " who has blighted her life ?

LAURA AND HER HERO.

HARRY MILLS, as he went leaping along the rocky shore that day, apparently in such a loose, hap-hazard manner, had a definite object in view. He had marked it, and steadily pursued it since he had first come out in this direction; so he went on, leaping lightly from rock to rock, always keeping in view a flutter of something, — a flutter of something scarlet and gold, like a gay barbaric flag, flung out in defiance. What was it? He knew well. What need for anybody else to know that it was Laura Wingate's shawl? Laura herself had n't the faintest idea of hanging out a lure as she sat there talking fitfully with Sue Mills. They had been there half the afternoon, shut in by the rocks from any sight or sound but the sea's, and perhaps that was the reason that gay Laura's usual brightness had tempered down into that wistful abstraction which she so rarely shows. Perhaps the restless voices of the ocean suggested her thoughts.

"Ah me!" she said, with a faint sigh, "I am lonesome under this monotonous life, Sue. I want to go away somewhere and see the world. I wish something would happen, not actually tragic, you know. Heigh-ho!" and she yawned wearily, stretching her hands toward the sea, with a yearning motion. Then a change

passed over her face as she caught sight of a new sail just beyond the Point. "Sue, I walked with a merman last night, in a blue jacket. He wanted somebody to run away with him. What do you say to my going? A handsome fellow he was, Sue, tall and dark, and with such beautiful eyes, with a scar just under the left one."

"Laura, you don't mean that Tom Wilson has come back?" And Sue Mills, at the mention of her old lover, turned pale.

"Yes; Captain Tom has come back, Sue, handsomer and taller than ever. What do you say to my running away with him, eh?"

"Does he want you to?" asks Susan, really incredulous, but with a look of anxiety and fright upon her face.

"Does he want me to!" and Laura mimicked her companion's voice. But in a moment her tone changed, a soft expression came into her eyes. She bent over and touched Susan's cold hand with her own warm one, while she said, "No, Susy, he wants *you;* and he thinks that now, perhaps, your father may be more relenting. This last voyage has been very prosperous, and he already owns half of the ship, which shows, you know, very substantially, that he has been entirely devoted to his duty."

"And he told you —"

"Yes, he told me he wanted you, Susy; that he had never wanted anybody else; that all through your father's opposition, and your submission to it, he had never ceased to love you, though for a time he was angry." There was a little pause, then she went on:

"And you fancied it was me. You were jealous, Sue, all last fall, when he was here. Me! jealous of me, you small simpleton."

There had come a warm glow into Susan's cheeks, and her eyes had a happy light in them as she said, —

"But you flirted with him, Laura."

"I flirted with Cap'n Tom? Well, I did n't know it."

Laura's face, as she uttered this, was full of some cold disdain. It faded in a moment, and she added more kindly, but with a sort of weary impatience, —

"That 's the way people *must* interpret, I suppose. Well, well, let them; who cares?"

"But, Laura!"

"Well."

"Why did n't you tell me before?"

"Why did n't I? Because I have kept my word and a tryst for you, my pretty black-eyed Susan"; and Laura laughed with all her old mischief.

Susan looked bewildered.

"What do you mean, Laura?"

"Only that I promised that wily and wicked Captain Tom that I would not betray him until I saw a white sail coming round the Point, with a blue flag for signal. Prepare yourself, Miss Susan; he 'll be here at your feet in fifteen minutes."

Susan sprang up, startled and confused; but that firm little hand, and the firmer will of Laura Wingate, pulled her back.

"Stay where you are, Susan; don't make a goose of yourself. After a year of faithfulness and well-doing, Captain Wilson certainly deserves a hearing. If you

are still afraid to trust him, tell him so; don't run away. I am the one to do that, you know. Catch me playing Mrs. Malaprop"; and, laughing, Laura snatched up her shawl and started out of her nook.

One, two, three steps, and she swung round a narrow ledge to meet — what? no, not Captain Wilson, but Harry Mills.

It was not she who blushed. It was for Harry Mills, the tender-skinned fellow, to hang out his colors at this sudden meeting. There he was, going on quietly, the signal of gold and red no longer perceivable in the bend of the shore; but clearly seen by inward vision was that well-known eyrie of the cliffs, where he thought to find her. And suddenly the gleam of the gold and red, the old barbaric pattern, flashes into his eyes, and he meets that startled gaze, the very coolness of which half vexes him. So he thought it quite enough to blush for. Then she exclaimed: —

"Where *did* you come from? I declare you appear like a ghost, Harry!"

"I was down at the inlet, and 'sighted' you by your red flag," he answered, putting a finger on the gay silk fringe that floated over her arm.

"Oh! my shawl. And you were coming down upon me unawares. There I should have sat in the sun, innocent of danger, when pounce! you would have come down from the top cliff, like a cat upon a mouse. I know your tricks."

And she nodded and sparkled at the young man in her gay, *insouciante* manner, which he appreciated, perhaps, too keenly.

"But come," she broke out, after a breath of pause, "I 'm not going to stand here; are you?" And she dipped past him like a swallow on the wing, flinging back a little chain of sweet-linked laughter, and a glance that invited and defied.

He did not wait, but down sharp crag and ledge dashed on in pursuit. Again that saucy glance shot over her shoulder, and fleeing with sure but reckless foothold over rough ways of rock and loosened stones, she sang: —

"'Oh, follow, follow round the world,
Green earth and sunny sea —'"

"'So love is with thy lover's heart,
Wherever he may be,'"

responded her pursuer's voice, finishing the quotation which she had n't given him credit for knowing.

A little disconcerted, a false step was made, and she caught, breathless, at a projecting boulder, leaning her cheek against it, and facing him so, gazing wearily, but with mischievous smile, at him as he came up, and saying saucily, —

"What did you trip me up for, with your sentimental half of the string? 'T was n't fair."

"But 't was true, Laura."

"Oh, Harry, don't! I 've only this moment escaped from just such a scene, and then I 'm tired, and I 've hurt my foot or my ankle."

There was a hot glow in Harry Mills's cheek as he listened.

"You have just escaped, Laura? Then you were not pleased; you — "

"Oh, yes, I was pleased. I made the appointment myself. Oh, I was very much pleased; but I ran away just in time."

"In time for what, Laura?" broke out the young man, in exasperated tones.

She was standing still in that very attitude, her cheek against the gray old rock, and eying him with that concealed glimmer of fun. But here she drew up her slender figure, and put on a proper mask of pride as she exclaimed: —

"I really cannot see what right you have, Harry Mills, to ask me that question."

"Laura, I have no right; but — "

But here Laura broke in with her tinkling laugh, and cried, —

"Oh, Harry, what a dunce you are! I could n't play the disinterested friend, could I, and make appointments for those who were too timid to make them for themselves?"

Harry's face lightened.

"What have you been up to, Laura?" he asked. Then his eyes suddenly spanned the coast. He saw, just beyond, a little craft, with a blue flag flying above the white sail. There it lay, rocking with the tide, close in-shore. And there above, — who was that climbing the cliffs so alertly?

"What — no — yes, it is. Laura, you *have n't* thrown Sue into that man's path?"

"Harry, come and help me down, if you expect me to say anything. My foot is aching dreadfully, and I know I shall faint away if I 'm not taken care of."

He might have thought that this was one of her arch tricks, too, if he had not seen her face, really white and pinched with pain.

At this sight he bounded to her side and put out his arm.

"Lean on me, Laura; tell me what to do for you," he said, in the gentlest tones.

She clung to him a moment for rest, then, —

"Help me down into the hollow there, Harry."

He lifted her without further words, and placed her where she directed, — a natural cleft between the rocks.

"There, I shall be better in a minute. No, 't is n't a sprain; it 's my lame foot, — the one I hurt last winter on the ice. Once in a while I give it a twist, as I did when you made me slip on those stones."

"Laura, how can you?" he interposed.

"Then I had to stand parleying with you till I was like to faint," she went on, "because your curiosity was rampant to pry into affairs which did n't concern you. And even now, after causing all this mischief, you are dying to leave me, to rush off to that poor, abused Captain Tom, and make more mischief."

While she rattled on this reckless nonsense, Harry, never quite following her tricksy spirit, was vainly endeavoring to discover how much was in earnest, how much in frolic, and she enjoying his perplexity as usual. Presently she broke the silence with, —

"There, I 'm better now, and I 'll tell you all about it."

So she told of walking on the beach last night, and

meeting the unfortunate Captain Tom, who pleaded his cause to her for intercession. When she had ended he said, looking at her gravely, —

"I should n't have thought you 'd have dared the responsibility, Laura, of doing anything to further an affair of this kind."

She raised herself upon her elbow and exclaimed, with some vehemence, —

"Why not? Why not? Dare! Do you suppose I am such a weakling that I can't make up my mind which is the right side, and follow it? If Sue had had a mind of her own she would n't have been veered round by other people's wills, but she would have seen that Tom Wilson had the stuff in him for a real man, which you had n't one of you the sense to see, let me tell you. Wild! reckless! Well, what of that, when he had a good heart and a firm will beneath? I knew he 'd come out right, and he has; owns half the ship, and has been complimented by the Boston firm there, — what do you call them?"

"Did he tell you this, Laura?"

"My father told me last night, and Deacon Scofield confirmed it."

"Well, I am very glad, I 'm sure."

"You ain't, you little rue-faced old fellow! you 're sorry. You 'd like to keep Sue on tenter-hooks another six months; and the goose would let you, if there was a reason to hang a cobweb of suspicion on."

"And how do you know but there is? What makes you believe in Captain Wilson so enthusiastically, Laura?"

"Because I believe in my instincts, and they from the first have told me that Captain Tom was better than his enemies. But you Millses never did appreciate him. I wish I had taken him off your hands long ago."

Harry's brow clouded. "You seem to appreciate him enough for that," he retorted.

Her eyes sparkled.

"Good! I like this. 'Stand fair and fight, my lord of Aix.'"

"No, Laura, there shall be no fighting. I should never quarrel with you," the young man answered, in a different tone. Then vehemently: "Laura, you *must* listen to me. You know what I have meant; you know what my feelings have been all along, — that I love you, that I want you, Laura, for mine. Will you come?"

He was standing on a lower ledge than where she rested; and as he spoke, leaning involuntarily nearer, he put out his arms to her.

She caught his hands as he ceased speaking, and dropped her face against them, crying in a little passion of regret, —

"Oh no, no, Harry! I love you — yes, yes, I love you dearly, but not that way. I love you partly as Susan loves you, perhaps, for I have known you all my life."

The young man bent over her, much moved in some manner by her soft passion; and he asked: "Why, Laura, why can't you love me that way, — because you have known me all your life?"

"No, not that. Because — O Harry, don't you feel it? — you are not mine, nor I yours."

"But I will make you mine, and you shall make me yours. That is what I ask, Laura."

The look upon her face would have been a smile if it had not been so full of disturbance. But she presently said gently, —

"Don't you see, Harry, that we are not naturally sympathetic? See now. You have no patience with what you call my recklessness — my wild moods. I puzzle you; half the time you don't know whether I am in jest or earnest. You are amazed at the things I enjoy. And, on the other hand, you seem to me almost insensible to enthusiasm. If I were not so audacious, or if I didn't really regard you so truly, I should be chilled; but I get angry with you instead, and half your pursuits I can understand and relish as little as you mine. You think we may assimilate? That is a fatal mistake! We are neither of us wax; we could not be moulded into anything else than ourselves. As we are now, we make capital friends; but bring us nearer, and it would be like bringing two chords in different keys together — there would be discord. What is that you say about opposite temperaments forming better combinations? Well, it may be to a certain extent; but there must be likeness, and we haven't it, Harry: I do not belong to you."

The young fellow struck his foot impatiently against the rock as she finished, and exclaimed, —

"Where have you got these ideas, Laura? What books have you been reading?"

All the softness vanished from her face as he said this; and she answered sharply, and with a curling lip that suggested a sneer, "I have read the books that the rest of the world reads. What I have left or what I have taken from them is what the qualities of my own mind demanded. But why should I get angry with you?" and here she relented a little of her coldness. "Half the world think as you do, that books make the reader's ideas instead of merely meeting them as inevitable conclusions, or — But what is the use of talking, Harry? We can never agree on such subjects, which plainly proves my previous words, — we have no natural likeness."

"And yet you allow that we can be capital friends," he put in, with an unbelieving look.

"Friends? Yes; friends may differ essentially, and yet be very good friends, but lovers — no. If I married you, Harry Mills," she cried, with a sudden gust of passion, "I should be eternally alone on this earth!"

"Don't talk so, Laura. You don't know yourself," he answered, with provoking gentleness.

"I *will* talk so! And I know myself much better than you 'll ever know me. Don't know myself!" and she laughed aloud in derision. "Find me a woman who knows herself better at this point of her life. If you knew me a tenth part as well, you would think yourself lucky to have escaped me. Harry Mills, you like me now because I am something different from others that you meet, — because I amuse you, and because I am young and handsome. But I should make the torment of your life if I married you.

You 'd want to control me, and I would n't be controlled; and I should shock every fixed principle you possessed, in rebelling. Yes," eying him with irritation, "I dare say you think you know me better than I know myself. You know the Laura who is your friend, the gay, laughing Laura who teases Sue and makes a seeming jest of life. But there's another Laura you know nothing about — the real Laura, too — the Laura who lives, and loves, and hates with a passion and intensity which would startle you; which I have no doubt you would call morbid. But this Laura is a stranger to most, as to you. I have had the sense to conceal it here, for she is alien and wild."

Harry stood regarding her, with a gloomy look of conviction stealing over his face, — the conviction of the hopelessness of his suit, not of her beliefs. But after a while the gloom lifted a little, as he thought, —

"I 'll wait — this will pass."

How Laura would have laughed him to scorn could she have overheard this inward resolve!

When she raised her head, however, she saw nothing in his expression but perplexity and pain; and with some compunction for the sorrow she had wrought, and perhaps aggravated for the moment by her outspoken irritation, she said quite gently, —

"I am sorry to have hurt you, Harry."

He returned as gently, though somewhat ambiguously, —

"You could n't help it, Laura."

They walked home almost in silence; and both noticed without comment now that the little boat still

rocked at the shore, the blue flag fluttering to the wind. Mrs. Wingate stood in the front yard, talking to the Captain about "cuttin' that willer down" as they came up the road; and she broke off, as she stood, the dry branches from a withering shrub and thriftily gathered them into her apron.

"Why, where on earth have you been, Laura?" she said, rather impatiently, as the girl sauntered up the path. "Lucy and Hannah Scofield's been here, and waited and waited, till I told 'em 't wan't no use. You would n't come home till the cows did, maybe."

"Sue and I went down to the south shore," Laura answered, absently and almost indifferently.

Harry, contrary to his usual custom, did n't stop to chat with the Captain, but hurried away, with hasty good-nights. He took the picture of that parting group, however, with an awakened sense of its incongruity, — awakened perhaps by those passionate words, "She is alien and wild."

Alien and wild she indeed looked beside the burly old Captain, with his brown knobby face, and Dame Wingate's spare angularities. True types were they of primitive New England; but for her, who stood so near and yet so far, what fitting type was there?

What resemblance is there in all that rugged simplicity, that Puritan plainness of exterior, and that flowering of nature which hovers near them? Could they have once combed out

"That fawn-skin colored hair of hers,"

in lieu of those locks of dusty gray? Could they have ever flung out such intrepid glances from eyes of flame

and fire? Could either of those gaunt figures ever have boasted such smoothly rounded outlines? Harry Mills might have asked himself all these questions as he pondered upon her words and the scene he had left, for they were plainly perceivable enough. But did he note as well the strange dissimilarity of character, — the kind and generous, but utterly prosaic natures, in contrast with this kindling imagination, this winged spirit of ardor and daring?

Alien and wild indeed did she seem in every particular, with her youth, her personal attractions, and her visible culture of books and thought, in contact with these old and simply-bred people and their way of life.

Long ago had the village gossips said to each other: "Miss Winget 'll spile that girl, humoring her in all her notions; and the Cap'n 's worse 'n she is. I do believe they think there never was such a child."

Then when Laura was sent away to Boston for four successive years, only returning in rare school vacations, the gossips twittered on their perches still louder: —

"That girl just turns the Cap'n and Miss Winget round her little finger. Well, well, they 'll set her up so there won't be no living with her by and by. You'll see, you 'll see!"

But Laura had now been home two years, and the gossips *did n't* see, though they looked sharply, the fulfilment of their prediction. She was as fond of the burly old Captain, and as willing to do her mother's behests as before. Perhaps a trifle quieter; the wild spirit shaded and toned down, and sometimes wrapt in

some cloud of abstraction that gained for her that title by which people give a name to their own want of comprehension, — odd. "Laura was such an odd girl."

But that night, as she sat on the floor before the wood-fire blazing on the hearth, she did n't seem so very odd. Her mood of abstraction had blown away like a vapor as she turned from the garden-gate and followed her mother into the house. And there she sat all the evening, quite mollifying Mrs. Wingate by her flying needles, and pleasing the merry old captain by drawing him on to tell his "wonderful tales of the sea."

Rhody, passing in and out of the room — Rhody had been Mrs. Wingate's *help* for a score of years — Rhody, passing in and out on household care, thought as she had thought a hundred times at similar scenes : —

"Well, if they don't set their eyes by that child more 'n more every day ! "

But Rhody herself, grim spinster as she was, partook a good deal of this glamour, as many a sharp word of defence from her lips could have testified, when the gossips came prying with invidious suggestions. More than once she had been heard to declare that "there was n't such a girl anywhere round as Laura Wingate ; that she 'd beat them Scofields and Susan Mills all holler."

And still the gossips could n't forgive Laura for being so "odd," — which meant, simply, that they could n't forgive her dissimilarity to themselves — could n't forgive her independent will, her power of fascination, her gay disregard of irksome conventionalities, and, most of all, those four years of Boston school-life.

"Exham Academy was good enough for Sue Mills and Deacon Scofield's girls, but 't wan't good enough for that little wild thing of the Wingates. Squire Mills did n't do any more for Harry than they 'd done for that slip of a girl, and Squire Mills could buy and sell Cap'n Wingate any day."

They did n't know there was one treasure that all Squire Mills's money could n't buy from the Wingates.

And so the four years cast a shadow for them to glower and gossip in. It was a topic that never lost interest, for every now and then fresh material was added by the arrival of some fine guests, who brought an atmosphere of the great world into this quiet coast country, — an atmosphere wherein Laura moved as in her native element. They seemed to belong to her and she to them.

That very night, as she sat there plying her needles and her tongue with equal alacrity, she was giving many a thought to the contents of a letter her father had handed to her. It apprised her of the coming of one of these same guests, — an old school-friend of those four years.

"I shall be with you, I hope, Laura, on the 1st of July."

That was the intelligence that brightened Laura's cheeks, and dispersed her clouds as they gathered. She would see Emily Mayhew in a week. It was the last of June now; but on these Eastern shores summer lingered in its arrival, and sharp winds blowing round the Cape made the cheery blaze that brightened the broad hearths not unwelcome. In a week, however,

whether southern breezes blew or northern gales struck their icy spears against the rugged rocks, there would be tropic sunshine for Laura Wingate ; for one to whom she was neither alien nor wild would bring her companionship and sympathy, — would bring her, too, news from the brilliant world of men and women and books, for which she secretly stretched forth her arms, to which she secretly knew herself belonging.

Two years ago she had bidden adieu to such a life. Who may estimate the effects of that life upon this vivid temperament, this acute intelligence ? What ardors, what enthusiasms, what subtile knowledge it must have brought to light ; what thoughts and beliefs it must have set ablaze ; what emotions kindled !

Two years of seclusion and banishment. The girl of eighteen was twenty. Two years of seclusion had not quenched the fire ; though suppressed, it burned on steadily, shining through dark eyes, or flashing mutinously through quivering lips at rare times when put at bay, as it shone and flashed when Harry Mills strove vainly for the mastery of her heart. But now how far away was Harry Mills or his suit, — how far the love-perplexities of her "black-eyed Susan," whose weakness and timidity she had overborne with her ardent strength !

During this week of expectation, busied over a hundred household matters of preparation, she thought little and saw nothing of Sue, until the night before her guest arrived. She had gone down to the ledge of rocks just behind the hill, and, lying there half a-dream beneath the purple sky of sunset, she was suddenly roused by

her name spoken, and the words, "You have n't been near me all the week."

She came out of her dream. "Oh, Sue!"

"So Emily Mayhew 's coming!" proceeded Sue, in a little tone of pique. "You 'll forget us entirely when once she gets here."

A faint smile went out behind the hand Laura was leaning her chin against. Perhaps she recognized at that moment how little she *had* thought of the Millses for the last few days. She only said, however, —

"I think you have been forgetting *me*, Sue; though I don't question your right to, under the circumstances."

Sue colored, and a flutter of pleasure stirred her mouth before she replied, rather irrelevantly, —

"Father and mother are quite satisfied about him now."

"I knew they ought to be, and I congratulate you, Sue," Laura answered cordially, leaning forward, and stroking Susan's hand a moment caressingly. Then the two fell into silence for a while, Susan breaking it with the startling question, —

"Laura, do you ever expect to marry?"

"Expect? I *hope* I shall," answered Laura, coolly yet earnestly.

Susan laughed. "What other girl would have dared that answer?" she said.

"Why did you ask me in that tone? Why did you say *expect* to marry? Do you think my chance doubtful, Susan?" Laura broke in, unheeding Susan's comment.

"Doubtful? Oh no; not in that way. But you are so different from other people, I could n't help wondering if you ever expected to meet any one that you would like to marry."

"Expect!" And as Laura spoke the word again it was with an absent thrill in her tone; and, still looking toward the setting sun, where all the purple was fusing into deep crimson dyes, she repeated, smiling and flushing like the sun's tints, "Expect! Yes, I am expecting him, — my Sir Launcelot, — from day to day, perhaps from hour to hour. Somewhere I know he waits, as I for him. Somewhere I know that life is going on in which my own may find itself fulfilled; in which I may live and be expressed before I die. I have never looked upon his face, but I shall know him when he comes. When he comes!"

Suddenly she ceased; and out toward the crimson west, across the sea, she stretched her arms, with the smile deepened into dreamy depths.

Susan, strangely moved by surprise and some deeper emotions, did not break the silence. But a shadow crossed their feet. She looked up.

"How long have you been there, Harry? What! and Captain Tom, too?"

Captain Tom answered, swinging himself down from his eyrie with lithe movements, —

"How long? Oh, only long enough to catch a silence after talk." But the glance he flashed across at Laura's lighted face, in the moment that his back was toward the rest, as he alighted on the rock where they rested, gave her sure conviction that he had lost no word that she had spoken in the last few moments.

Well, it did n't hurt her. Captain Tom was one of the few persons who never thought Laura "odd"; so she was quite willing to trust him with her words. But she fully appreciated his cool implying of ignorance, to preserve the outward unity of circumstance. But Harry Mills, — had he too? Yes, he too. She knew it by the startled surprise that showed in his face, — a mixed look of perplexity and amazement. And more than ever she thanked the tact of Captain Tom, who kept the outward peace so coolly. He tried to keep as well — this good-natured Captain Tom — the peaceful unities of ordinary conversation; but it was not in the destiny of that day to die so easily.

A little sentence, commonplace enough in itself, was the torch which lighted this unsuspected magazine.

"So Alice Gale is going to be married."

"Yes, at last," returned Sue, with that queer tinge of womanish spite.

"Why do you say so?" asked Laura, frowning at the thoughtless sneer. She, who could love and hate with equal intensity, hated likewise all useless expenditures of expression.

"Why? Because it is only the fourth lover Alice Gale has had."

Captain Tom laughed. "Ah, well, Susy, she does n't believe in first love as implicitly as you do."

And here Laura flamed: —

"First love! neither do I believe in it when it holds insanely to mere clay images built up by imagination, unworthy idols that only degrade love. But that 's the unjust way you men and women, half of you, talk. A girl is

full of attraction : not her eyes, or her hair, or her color, or the beauty of her form is it simply, but a vitality that electrically informs the whole with a magnetism of which she only is conscious as she is conscious of life. So she wins what she never seeks. And do you suppose that any woman with heart and soul can find herself so near the heart and soul of another without some fluctuations of the spirit? Is it strange that, having moved such depths of emotion, she should be moved herself ? So it happens, perhaps, that she loves partially, — nay, it is almost inevitable that she does ; or she may love *Love* in the person, and mistake the lover. Haply if she discovers her mistake before it is irrevocably sealed. And it is such women, — yes, I say it, because it is truth, — women who have both deep and delicate natures, whom you oftenest denounce as fickle, as coquettes, whom the mass of men speak of as robbed of her freshness. Freshness ! What is this freshness which they laud? It is the crudeness which comes from inexperience, or from poverty of nature. 'What we want,' said a beautiful person whom I met once, 'what we want is not simply innocence, but nobility, — nobility that understands the good and the evil, yet whose garment's hem passes by all evil unassoiled.' "

Here she ceased suddenly, leaving her auditors stunned into silence. They had heard Laura talk much heresy, but never anything quite so startling as this outburst. At length Harry Mills's even tones broke the silence : —

"This all seems fine in theory, Laura ; and to one who has never proved it, specially to one who by im-

pulsiveness of nature naturally adopts the ultraisms of the day, I can well understand it is fascinating."

Laura Wingate's face was a study just then. It had been glowing before; but now, as Harry Mills spoke, something it had not worn previously dawned or flashed into it. A gleam of defiance, of scorn, and open mutiny. She hardly waited for him to finish ere her words leaped forth: —

"Theory! You talk of theory as if, being a woman and young, I must perforce be a mere theorist. Yes, I am a woman and young; but I have proved enough of what I assert to know its truth."

Harry Mills at this turned his gaze from the sea with a swift movement, and fronted the daring speaker. She went on: —

"Four years I lived in the midst of a family where I met constantly some of the best and most varied society. Four years to a person of any quickness of perception is something; one can see and learn much of life in that time. Besides, the Mayhews were not people who believed in keeping young girls in the background. They believed in society — society such as they had — as a means of education. So in those four years I met more men and women than I should meet in a century here. And as I learned to know them, I learned to know myself too. What I learned was sufficient to prove my theory." She concluded abruptly, with a little shake of her shoulders, such as a person might give who feels impatiently that they may have said too much on sacred things.

But Sue Mills roused her again.

"You don't mean to say, Laura, that you have ever liked anybody," she stammered, in that shamefaced way which some girls always assume when they allude to affairs of the heart.

"*Liked anybody!*" flung out Laura in scornful mimicry, half veiled in her derisive laugh. "I've liked a dozen, — imagined them severally, perhaps, heroes, because they turned their heroic side to me; perhaps they suggested *my* hero to me; perhaps I supposed for a time *my* hero had come as I looked upon them, and was consequently disappointed when I found myself mistaken."

Harry Mills brought his brows together, and drew a deep, inaudible sigh. Sue laughed faintly, not quite comprehending, thinking Laura such an odd girl. Captain Tom alone approved. He turned his bronzed face toward her, and said, —

"How unlike American girls you are, Laura! You remind me of Frenchwomen, with perhaps a dash of the Celtic blood. I was once shipwrecked on the coast of Ireland, and for two months was detained in a wild shore country where the only habitable place was the great house of the neighborhood, — Glengarry Hall. With true Irish hospitality they insisted upon entertaining me; and entertainment it indeed was. The father, the head of the family, was a true Celt; but his wife was a French lady. The sons and daughters partook of both natures; and such a combination! Frank, enthusiastic, and full of all sorts of arch perception, they kept you literally alive in every faculty. But the girls were so honest; that was the peculiarity. They would talk

so heartily and earnestly about things our girls blush over, just as you have now, Laura."

Little Sue looked uneasy at this outright praise in which she had no share, and Harry glanced quickly, with his old suspicion, from the bronze face to the fair one opposite; but Laura heeded nothing of this observation. The sympathetic sense of her, so cordially expressed, warmed her heart like wine, and made her for the moment unconscious of the others' want of sympathy. But Sue brought her back in another moment.

"You see how you have made Tom appreciate you, Laura!" she said, with an uneasy attempt at fun.

Laura elevated her eyebrows. "I don't *make* anybody do anything, Sue," she answered; and then she rose up, pulled her shawl about her, shivered a little, and said in quite another voice: "The wind has changed; I am getting cold." Whereat they all rose, and, by tacit consent, turned homeward.

This was the last time Laura ever sat upon the rocks there with Harry and his sister and Captain Tom. The next day brought Emily Mayhew, and Emily Mayhew brought with her the grand project which changed everything so before another summer. This project was that Laura should spend the winter with her at Washington. It was the year Mr. Mayhew was in Congress.

"Father and mother both said I must not come back without you, Laura."

"But, Emily, I have n't a thing suitable to wear; and I will *not* go unless —"

"Unless you are as fine as anybody, eh?"

"Just that, Em. You know I must be well-dressed to feel contented."

"But your mother will let you do anything."

"Ye-s, perhaps; but I don't feel as if it were just right for me to spend so much. And this would seem so very much to mother, merely for clothes. I know how it would be. She would think she must economize in some way. So she would make herself uncomfortable, I know."

But Emily Mayhew had a fertile brain. She fell into silence and thought. At last, —

"Look here, Laura, I can manage it. You need n't buy a thing, scarcely, and yet you can be better dressed than any girl there."

"What?" and Laura's eyes were large with surprise.

"No, not a thing. You have forgotten, but I remember, the loads of lovely things your father brought home from Marseilles and Canton and India. Your mother showed them to me, you know, that summer I visited here. She said: 'Some day Laura will have these.' Why not have them now, Laura?"

And the girl-planner sparkled with her new idea. Laura, too, caught it like flame.

Thus, full-armed, they broached the subject to Mrs. Wingate. She looked grave. She hesitated. She brought up all the obstacles in the world, which these two overruled with the readiness of youth. Finally the Captain said, —

"Oh, let her go, let her go, Mis' Wingate. She can't be young but once."

And so at last it was decided. She was to go. Then

Emily Mayhew had a revel over those "loads of lovely things."

There was a blue crêpe from Canton, sprinkled all over with little white silk stars. Emily held it up against the bright complexion of Laura, and shrieked with delight at the effect. A white India muslin made her rave. Then there was pink and white coral; queer ornaments of strange woods, spicy and foreign, with settings of gold; and chains of lovely Venetian shells, fit for a mermaid to wear at her wedding.

"Oh, I never, never *did!*" sighed Emily, fresh from her city *ennui*, in a rapture over these treasures. "And how came the Captain to get them?"

"Oh, sailors are always bringing things from over seas; and he said he knew I 'd grow up to want them."

"The old darling!" And Emily still unfolded.

She found shawls fit for a princess, two or three silks that would "stand alone," and odd, out-of-the-way finery that would transform Laura, as she had said, into the best-dressed girl in Washington. Then Emily Mayhew did for Laura what she would n't do for herself, and thought there never was such a frolic. It was as good as getting up theatricals. She cut, fitted, and helped Laura and Abigail Beamus, the country seamstress, to get up that unique wardrobe in a style of fashion and taste that did credit to her memory and imitation. And this was the way that Laura came to be, — yes, actually not only the best-dressed, but the most lovely girl in Washington that winter.

Everybody who knows anything about our "society" at all, knows something what Washington society is,

knows how life runs rapidly on in rout and revel and reunion. How the new faces, the new characters, varied and strange, flash before us in quick succession! How one gets glimpses of life and human nature in a few months here one might wait for a century elsewhere! All this "tells." Upon those who have not strength, will, purpose, it wreaks ruin. They become besotted with the outward glare and gloss and glitter. They lose individuality and become submerged; lost, finally, with the thousand brilliant particles that float down the brilliant stream. Others it *educates* merely; gives them insight, penetration, experience, which enriches and matures. Laura belonged to this latter class. In three months she felt as if she had lived three years. In this swift knowledge there was much that was saddening. She had seen a great deal of social and political intrigue, had tested a good deal of apparent sincerity, had learned a good deal more of the intense selfishness of the great world. The beginning of the three months had found her a bright, ardent, enthusiastic girl, with much natural perception, and a wide fund of belief. The end left her as you see her. Look! There she stands, talking with Judge Wilmington. She has on that very blue crêpe, sewn all over with little white silk stars; and on her head there are those very shells of Venice, shining and silvering their pearl opaline lustre into the light of the chandeliers. And the face — that is no longer full of fresh expectation, no longer bright with belief. If there is expectation there in the deep dark eyes, it is vague and remote. The gay plans of youth have given way to the subtile knowledge of

womanhood; and for her beliefs, she still believes in God and humanity. There are times when we take long leaps in life, and others where for years we seem to float on in the same current. This long leap had come to Laura, when months stand for years.

Judge Wilmington, who had been an old friend all these three months, had been watching her face. Once she gave a little low sigh.

"What is it, Miss Laura?" he asked.

She laughed then. "I don't know, I am sure."

"Then I know better than you do"; and he told her just the conclusions we have told.

"And you find it so hollow, you are a little tired of it all; and more than that, you are saddened and surprised at such a view of the world. By and by you will get used to it, my child, and then you will see more clearly the simple, unostentatious goodness that lies at the depths of some hearts. Miss Laura, do you remember a story you were reading the other evening? — it was one of Thackeray's — I read it myself not long ago, and I remember a few words in it very well. 'Do we know anybody? Ah! dear me, we are most of us very lonely in the world. You who have any who love you, cling to them and thank God.'"

Laura's face softened. She did not speak, but she thought of a great kitchen, miles and miles away, where everything was in contrast to the splendor before her now, but where she knew that those who sat before the blazing fire upon the hearth were thinking of her with constant love. "You who have any who love you, cling to them and thank God."

Perhaps Laura in her heart thanked Him as she thought; perhaps, too, she felt a little sad and ashamed that for so many, many weeks she had looked upon this hollow splendor with a feverish delight that made her think regretfully of the time when she must exchange it for the dull quiet of her country home.

Judge Wilmington, who had taken a great fancy to this honest little girl from the first, and had watched her career these three months, was now watching and reading her expression. Presently he said to her, —

"Miss Laura, you have tried all these gay people: you have seen all the splendid youths who appeared to carry every virtue and grace of character behind those fascinating exteriors of broadcloth and fine linen. Now I want you to see and to know a friend of mine. He is not very handsome, he is not at all fashionable, nothing like those young princes in wonderful cravats and diamond shirt-studs opposite us. There, one of them is eying me now, as if he thought I had no business to this place beside you. Shall I go over and tell him I will give it up to him, or shall I bring this friend of mine, Miss Laura?"

"You will bring your friend before anybody," answered Laura, laughing at the old judge's quaint fun, but quite in earnest to see this friend.

So the "friend" was brought. Laura saw him leave off talking to the gentleman he was standing with as the judge said something to him; and she fancied it was more to please the judge than from any desire of his own. This was quite natural for a man no longer in his first youth, but the young girl was nevertheless a lit-

tle piqued while she owned its justice. As he stood before her she saw a man certainly not very handsome, not at all fashionable; but he looked the gentleman, and there was power in the quiet face with its slightly weary expression. His manner was kind, and full of the simple ease of a man who had met the world; but Laura felt the lack of interest, perhaps the *empressement* which had characterized the manners of the men she had seen in this Washington society, men who had possibly formed their model upon the character of him who, years before, dazzled the heads and carried captive the hearts of a great portion of this society, and whose secret of popularity with women was said to be that every woman with whom he talked seemed to be for that time the only woman in the world to him. But the grave gentleman who stood talking now with Laura Wingate had taken for his model in no particular the character of this American courtier. His words were pleasant, but his air was a little abstracted, which piqued Laura and made her feel uncomfortable and at disadvantage. In short, they did n't get on comfortably together at all, and when there came sauntering by one of those princes in diamond shirt-studs Laura welcomed him with relief, and Mr. Shafton rejoined his friends across the room, probably wondering what Judge Wilmington had carried him away to bore this little girl for. The judge had watched the whole scene with a mixture of vexation and amusement; and he said to himself, half laughing, as he saw the end of his plan, —

"Well, well, that comes of an old fellow like me meddling with such things. I 've been a bungler."

However, he managed in his disappointment to bungle a little more before he was through with it. He could n't abide the fine-gentleman species, and as soon as possible he found time to draw Laura aside, and say to her reproachfully, —

"How could you send Shafton off for that pink and white fellow, Miss Laura?"

And Laura answered, with a good deal of spirit, —

"Mr. Shafton did not wait to be sent off. He condescended to me just as long as his politeness could endure it; and I am not sure that he did n't at last, by some freemasonry, summon Tommy Peyton to the rescue."

"There 's no freemasonry between such men as James Shafton and Tommy Peyton, Miss Laura," retorted the judge, with grim humor. And Laura, vexed and mortified and weary, felt ill-used and "out of sorts" with everybody. She went home with a new distrust of herself. Humiliated and abashed, she sat in judgment on herself. I dare say it was good for her.

"Here have I been," she thought, "very scornful of the froth and foam of society, but when the solids are placed before me I don't know anything what to do with them. I believe I have been vain and arrogant, and over-rated myself." And then a little twinge of girlish pique would rise again, and — "But I don't like that Mr. Shafton any way; he was self-absorbed and stupid, and it was all his fault," she would declare. And she really thought she did n't like him. So the time went by, and this sensitive little girl, from that one humiliation of finding herself awkward and ill at ease, and

with not a thing to say, became shy of the "solid" people, and let herself drift down the gayer current, with all her aspirations for a higher and nobler life aching out of sight. This kind of excitement now had lost its freshness for her, therefore it had lost zest. It was all very wearisome and unsatisfying; but with a kind of despair of anything better in the midst of this vortex she yielded to it, from day to day, from night to night, when suddenly the merest accident helped her to a change.

It was at a crowded reception somewhere, and there was such a jam in the cloak-room at the time of their departure that she stepped into an ante-room outside, to wait for the Mayhews, who were still in the *mêlée* of shawls and wraps. She had waited a long time, she thought, and wondered they did not appear. It was getting rather annoying, too; for the crowd was thinning, and one or two young men had passed her more than once with impertinent stares of admiration. All in a moment it occurred to her that there was another door opening from the dressing-room into the hall opposite; and in dismay she realized her situation. The Mayhews had gone out on that side, and supposed that she was safely in charge of the Wilmingtons, who had frequently taken her home.

What should she do? How extricate herself from this painful position? Oh, if some familiar face would appear in the throng! — even Tommy Peyton's, of which she had been so weary not an hour ago. Every moment it was growing worse; for most of the ladies had gone, and the crowd was rapidly thinning. She drew her hood closer, and looked about her in despair.

Thank Heaven! there *was* a familiar face. It seemed to her like her best friend's, then. Everything was forgotten but this feeling of relief. She started forward with outstretched hands, and a smile upon her lips.

"Oh, Mr. Shafton! Mr. Shafton!"

He came toward her with some surprise; but a few words made him comprehend her situation. In the most simple, cordial manner he manifested his care for her. The night was cold, and there was a storm coming on. Already the ground was white with snow, and the wind blew the fine, icy particles in their faces as they emerged from the doorway. Not a carriage was to be obtained, and the distance was more than a mile. Her companion stopped for a moment at this view of things, and looked disturbed. He glanced down at her feet. "Have you overshoes on?" he asked. She put out a white slipper, shining with satin ribbon and pearl shells, and laughed

"And no covering but this?" touching the silk cloak.

"We came in the landau, you know, and made no allowance for accidents. But I am not delicate, Mr. Shafton; I have been drenched through often down on our shores at Derry."

"But you are not at Derry now. The atmosphere here at Washington is a blight for those unaccustomed to it," he answered quickly. "But I can do something for you; you must wear this"; and he removed the cape from his cloak and put it over her shoulders. "Now," he said, "I shall make you walk very briskly; that is the best safeguard there is for you."

He was true to his word. So swiftly did he urge her

along that she had some ado to keep up with him. Once he remarked, —

"I dare say this is a difficult pace for you, but it may keep you from a chill." Then several times he spoke to ask her if she suffered from cold. There was little else said; for their rapid motion and the driving snow were not favorable to talk. But Laura did not find fault with him now.

Arrived at last at the Mayhews', she found them, as she conjectured, quite easy about her, supposing that she had gone home with the Wilmingtons. Mr. Shafton followed her in, and astonished them, first by his presence, and then by his explanation of it. "And you walked home, Laura, in those slippers!" ejaculated Emily, in dismay. Laura put forth two little dingy, drenched feet, that were so spotless a few hours before, and laughed gayly at Emily's fears.

"You 'll catch your death, child," sighed Emily.

"Oh no, Em, I 'm all in a glow. Mr. Shafton made me run every bit of the way." Even Mr. Shafton laughed here, but the next thing he said, quite peremptorily and gravely, —

"The only thing to be done now is to take the strongest precautions. She should have" — turning to Mrs. Mayhew — "a warm bath and something hot to take before she goes to bed; and even with this, I am sadly afraid, my dear young lady, that you won't escape an influenza."

In another moment he had made his adieux and departed; and over her hot punch, after her bath, Laura merrily related her adventure, and laughed gayly at

Emily, who predicted that Mr. Shafton was to be her "hero," in consideration, as she termed it, of this romantic event.

"Romantic! do you call it romantic, Em? I protest I can't see the romance of racing home over a mile of wet pavement beside a gentleman who never opens his lips but to ask some necessary question. It was kind, I allow, but not romantic."

"I suppose you would have been better pleased to have made a pretty stroll of it, oblivious of coughs and colds and cramps. To have had your cavalier perfectly indifferent to the inclemency of the night, while he devoted himself to the happy chance of making your acquaintance, which he should proceed to accomplish by leisurely bringing up all the sentimental subjects, comparing notes on favorite authors, discussing elective affinities, etc. He might have varied it occasionally by admiring the feet that —

'beneath her petticoat,
Like little mice stole in and out.'

Very wet feet they must have been too; but you would both of you have been sublimely disregardful of that."

Laura laughed. "Em, go to bed. You are too funny. I sha' n't sleep to-night; but for the last word I declare that Mr. Shafton is n't my 'hero.' Why, Em, he 's middle-aged, he talks to himself, and he treats me like a granddaughter."

Emily elevated her eyebrows, and answered, out of pure fun, —

"Well, you see if this middle-aged man does n't rush round to-morrow to inquire how you are."

But she was mistaken.

Mr. Shafton did not rush round on the morrow. He met Mr. Mayhew on the street, however, and inquired how "that little girl" was after her wet feet. And two or three days following, Laura was out walking, and he crossed over to meet her, smiling down upon her, and saying, "So the wetting did no harm? The air of Derry must make fine constitutions."

A word or two more and he went on, bowing pleasantly, but with that half-abstracted manner which Laura had noticed at first. She no longer blamed him as self-absorbed and stupid; yet he was still "middle-aged," and treated her "like a granddaughter," she thought. But that evening at a levee he came to her and began asking her about Derry. He had spent a summer there, years ago, and was full of interest. By and by Laura discovered that she was talking in the most unreserved manner of her home and home pursuits, and that he was listening earnestly, or replying with warmth and respect, as if her opinions and experiences were of value to him.

"Well," said Judge Wilmington, as she passed him at the latter part of the evening, "you don't dislike my friend on longer acquaintance so much, do you?"

"Oh, no, I like him."

"What do you say, then, to coming to my house to-morrow, to dine with him and three or four more old fogies like him, Miss Laura? Mind, now, there 'll not be one of your fine gentlemen among them."

She nodded, laughing, —

"I 'll come, I 'll come."

She went, and found herself in the choicest society. Men of letters and travel, chance visitors most of them, full of wit and overflowing with mellow experience. Mr. Shafton was clearly at home in this society; and Laura listened with amazement at his gayety and exuberance of fine spirits; but it was the gayety of a man, and not a boy. Later, she could not help being gratified as he left brilliant and mature women to talk with her.

She met him a good deal after this, and he became a visitor at the Mayhews. A friend of the family's, he was her friend too. Kind, thoughtful, and sympathetic, though twenty years apart from her, she found that he understood every least shade of feeling that she ever half expressed. She forgot the "granddaughter" treatment, forgot her past annoyance, and began to regard him as such a "splendid friend."

There was about Mr. Shafton nothing of that air of conscious masculinity which always carries with it the possibility of a suitor. He had that simple, manly sincerity of nature and action which is devoid of vanity, and which invites confidence. Acquaintance, then, with him was so freely natural, so earnest and unembarrassed, that it must have been a much vainer girl than Laura to have speculated upon his preferences. And if he had this effect, it was not strange that it should go still deeper and make her unconscious of herself.

A month passed in this way. Occasionally Judge Wilmington would say to her, —

"I 'm glad you appreciate Mr. Shafton, Miss Laura."

And Laura would answer honestly, —

"Oh, I like him very, very much."

So occupied was she by this "splendid friend" she forgot her "hero"; but there came a day when she found him. It was at one of those choice dinner-parties which Judge Wilmington — who knew everybody worth knowing who came and went — had the happy faculty of getting up.

Laura, in the drawing-room after dinner, made one of a group of three, partly by chance, partly by choice, as such groupings come.

There was Mr. Shafton, a Mr. Hunter, and herself to form the group. At first the talk included her; and though these two were so much beyond her in years and experience, she felt at ease, and expressed her thought readily. But, as was natural, she became a listener at last. It was one of those rare bits of conversation that sometimes flow out to the one or two in the corners of festive rooms, while all around and about there is the gay bustle of the occasion. The subject happened to be now some point of philosophy, involving a point of humanity, upon which the two gentlemen differed. Mr. Shafton at last, with an earnestness that had in it a noble tenderness, — for he was urging the protection of the weak against the strong, — presented his views at length. His voice grew soft and persuasive, with a melancholy cadence in it, as if the injustice of the world oppressed him and made him despairing; and his manner, though decided and believing, was tinged with the sadness which the knowledge of another's unbelief upon a vital question is sure to bring to one

whose nature and whose habit it is to look deeply and closely into life.

And Laura listened to this earnest plea, into which all the fervor of the speaker's heart was flowing, with a rapt attention that made her face eloquent of all her admiration and appreciation, both for the speaker and his words. She had quite forgotten herself; she was lost in the tender and heroic atmosphere that her fancy had evolved from what she heard, when, as if the intensity of her gaze had something magnetic in it, Mr. Shafton suddenly turned, in the midst of a sentence, and met her eyes. He started, paused a moment, — just a breathing-space while his glance held hers, — then went swiftly on to the end. And in that moment the truth flashed upon Laura. This was her "hero."

"I have never looked upon his face, but I shall know him when he comes!"

Did she remember these sure words she had once spoken; and that she had looked upon his face many, many times, and never known it until now? There was not chance for much thought, for the end came swiftly. There were a few more words of the conversation; then Mr. Hunter rose, dropping the discussion. He had seen the look, he had marked the break in his companion's voice, and knew that something more was pending than the matter in hand.

And Laura was alone with her "hero," though in the midst of a festive company; for the gay hum of voices, and the sweet clangor of music, the movement and murmur, filled the room with sound and stir, and left them the magic seclusion that lurks in the

midst of a multitude. He bent down as Mr. Hunter left them, and picked up the little glove she had dropped. When he lifted his head his glance again sought hers. Holding the little glove as gently as he might have held the little hand, he said lowly, —

"In my youth I read an old German story of a man who, for years, had been hunting for a certain precious pearl, whose magic should end his wanderings and crown his life with joy. Once or twice he fancied he had found it, but time proved him mistaken. At last, when he had relinquished the hope and the search, and resigned himself to his fate, he saw shining before him, one dark and stormy night, the treasure for which he had searched so long. But youth was gone, and with it youth's fresh and gallant bearing. How, then, could he hope that so fresh and lovely a thing would consent to shine upon his bosom? — Laura, I cannot tell the end of the story, can you?"

"The end is what you care to have it," answered Laura softly.

The tender clangor of the music around, about, and above them burst forth in fuller measures here, — triumphal strains, that drowned the clamor and hum of the gay voices, and bore upon its resistless tide the burden of a blissful tale, old as the world, yet forever new.

"I told you he was to be your 'hero,' Laura," laughed Emily Mayhew, jubilant over her congratulations.

And Judge Wilmington, after saying hearty words of

approval, said, at last: "This is better than one of your 'fine gentlemen' Laura, is n't it?"

And, better than all, the old couple down on the shores of Derry were well pleased with this "hero." They recognized him to be what he was, — one of the world's true men: and they knew that Laura's heart would never grow astray from them under his influence.

Sue Mills, looking at her young and handsome lover, could n't understand how Laura could make a hero of that quiet, grave man, who was no longer young.

Her brother understood it better. Harry Mills was candid enough to confess to himself, as he looked at this quiet, grave man, that Laura had been clearer-minded than he thought.

Rhody enjoyed the affair after her fashion.

"To think," she said, with mock humility, to the gossips, — and her voice, in spite of her demure efforts, had a savor of triumph, — "to think that our Laury should a' married one o' them high-headed city lawyers; and she ain't a bit sot up, nuther. I tell *yew*; gim me a raal downright sensible Yankee girl, with a good eddication, and nothin' can spile 'em."

With which sensible conclusion of Rhody's let us leave Laura and her "hero."

CHRISTINE.

IT was certainly one of the most disagreeable days of the season. Rain and sleet and snow and a dense, driving fog vied with each other for ascendency.

The three girls sitting together in Mrs. Weymouth's room in Mrs. Haig's boarding-house would lift their crimped and curled and banded heads every five minutes or so, to proclaim that they never saw such weather.

"Was there ever anything like it? Is n't it horrid?" asked Alice Weymouth, by way of variety.

"Yes, very horrid; but I know another day just like it. Don't you remember that last matinée on Saturday, Alice?" said Christine Vanderlyn.

"Sure enough, Chris. And don't you remember the little libretto boy?" Whereupon Alice Weymouth went off in a gust of gay laughter at her own recollections.

"What was it about the libretto boy? Tell us, Al!" cried Milly Davis, the third of the party.

"Tell *us*. Well, I don't think Chris needs to be told. Ask Chris to tell *you*. I believe he addressed his remarks to her."

Christine laughed. "There is n't much to be told,

Milly," she said. "It is n't much of a story. It was funny to us; perhaps it won't be funny to you. It was the way we took it. We went down to the music-hall that afternoon in our waterproofs, you must know, and the hoods over our bonnets. Underneath I had a pretty little hat and a very presentable sack. But we stopped in the vestibule, enveloped in our cloaks, and were just about removing them, when Alice spied a libretto boy and beckoned him. While she was buying the libretto I happened to think we had no opera-glass, and so asked the youngster where we should go to hire one. He looked at us both from head to foot, as if he were measuring us; then, with the most patronizing air, he answered, nodding his head at us confidentially, —

"'In the lobby, mum; and ye 'll have to pay ten dollars security,' with another glance at our forlorn old waterproofs, as much as to say, 'Guess that 's beyond *your* means.'

"And it was; Alice and I did n't have three dollars between us. But we were n't such forlorn things as our waterproofs indicated; and after we had shed them we concluded the boy, if he could have seen us, would have supposed it possible that we might have been worth ten dollars. Think, Milly, of not looking ten dollars' worth!" And Christine laughed again as the humor of the whole thing struck her.

But Milly did n't laugh. She could see no fun in the story, as Christine thought she might not. The only remark it evoked from her was: —

"I should have thought you would have felt so mean, girls. *I* should have felt humiliated."

"Should you? Well, I must say it did n't strike me in that light." And Christine laughed with more zest than before.

"Humiliated! What a dunce you are, Milly!" cried Alice Weymouth. "Can't you see that it was just as funny as it could be? The idea of that youngster's — why, he was n't more than a dozen years old — taking such a shrewd outside estimate of us. We *did* look forlorn, you know. And then — but it 's of no use; you never did see the humor of anything."

This was very true. Milly Davis was one of those persons who never see such humor as this, — never see the fun of anything. She was one of those countless people whose *amour propre* is wounded by occurrences like these. Christine Vanderlyn, on the contrary, had so keen a sense of humor that she could see the ludicrous side even of her own defeats and discomforts, and she sometimes dramatized her own woes in so arch a manner that many persons half suspected her of lack of feeling. And this little scene that I have depicted gives a true indication of her, and this side of her character, — this gay and humorous side which was so often misunderstood, or at least supposed to be the whole of her. But underneath this, far out of sight to those who did not know her well, there was another Christine Vanderlyn whose story I propose to tell. Another Christine Vanderlyn, whose heart was aching and hungry and sorrowful, mourning over the past and the present, and the possible future, which she thought had been marred by this very misunderstanding of her double nature.

As Milly Davis went up to her room for a knot of worsted she had left behind her, Christine said in a low voice to her friend Alice, —

"Ah, I wish sometimes I was like Milly! She never gets into such scrapes as I do; never laughs when she ought to be sentimental or serious, and gets generally mistaken, and blamed, and called names."

"My gracious, don't wish to be like Milly Davis, Christine! She never can hold but one idea at a time, and that 's a mighty limited one."

"Well, I don't know but your one-idea people turn out the happiest. I believe I have too many ideas. If I had had but one idea, perhaps my story might have been a different one, Alice."

"Yes, if you had been Polly Jones your story would have been Polly Jones's story, that 's the only conclusion. If you had been somebody else, of course your story would have been different. But as it is, you are Christine Vanderlyn, and as for your story, I don't consider that all told by any means yet."

"One chapter is finished, at any rate, Al."

"Nonsense, Chris, the chapter is only begun. Why, there never was anything more palpably *un*finished. Nothing ever ends like that, — in silence and mystery."

"Hush, there comes Milly."

And when Milly entered Christine was gayly humming the Jewel Song of Marguerite's in Faust.

"That recalls the matinée," said Alice. "What a good time we had that afternoon, though we did make guys of ourselves with those waterproofs, and sat in the family circle, and altogether did n't look worth ten dollars!"

"You *did n't* sit in the family circle!" cried the little aristocratic — no, the snobbish — Milly.

"We *did;* and better people than we are sat there, Miss Milly," Alice retorted spiritedly.

"Well, you and Christine are the queerest girls! Now, I never have a good time unless I go in as good style as anybody, and have as good a seat."

"By that you mean the costliest, Milly," broke in Christine, stopping her Jewel Song. "That 's *your* way, Milly; and you are not very singular in it. A great many persons here in America have that way, — the costliest, but not always the most comfortable, take it all round. The seat may be the most fashionable and the most expensive, but it may pinch the purse so, you are very uncomfortable in another direction; and then you are a slave to follow such a lead. Foreigners laugh at us for this. They say we don't dare do as we would like to do, — as is most convenient for us, — because our richer neighbor may possibly laugh at us. Alice and I could n't afford to pay two dollars for a seat, so we paid our one dollar, and found ourselves in the best of company."

Milly tossed her head a little; but she was more than a little impressed by Christine's unwonted gravity in handling her subject; for Christine was usually so fond of her joke, so funnily satirical, that such auditors as Milly Davis could never quite understand her. Consequently, though she succeeded in making them some way uncomfortable, she did not impress them with her truth. This afternoon, however, that other Christine, that earnest and tender Christine she kept shyly under

lock and key most of the time, had crept up to the surface, and tempered her tones and her words. Milly thought she had never liked Christine so well as this afternoon, specially when she sang in a soft, low voice those lovely songs of Marguerite's, and went into raptures, in a girlish manner Milly could quite understand, over the way Miss Kellogg gave it.

"Oh! *do* you remember, Alice, how exquisitely she sang there in the duo? *Do* you remember that

'Ti voglio amar idolatrer
Parlar ancora!
Io tua sarò si t'adoro
Per te vogl'io morir!'"

In her enthusiasm of recollection, Christine had arisen from her chair, and dramatically rendered the scene in look and gesture as she sang.

Milly was very much surprised to find that Christine, who had always laughed a little at sentiment before in her presence, could be so impassioned. But for once Christine was revealing her deepest and most earnest self before her, because she was forgetful for the time of Milly's shallower nature.

"Why, Christine!" exclaimed Milly, as she ended, "you sang that last 'Per te vogl'io morir!' as if you were really dying for somebody!"

A bright color sprang into Christine's cheek, and for a moment there was a gleam of conviction in her eyes. Then it all faded, and the old, gay, laughing, deriding Christine, whom Milly knew much better, had come back. And while she laughed there in this fashion

there was a ring at the door-bell, which perked their girl-ears into silent attention for some possible caller. Only Christine was careless. She had no interest in any possible caller. That had gone by — that hope and that interest — with the dead year, and one who had dropped out of her life as utterly as the year itself.

But it was no caller. "Only a little girl with holders, — flat-iron holders, or to take off the blower, miss," communicated Katrine, the good-natured German maid. "A little speck of a girl; and she seemed so anxious to sell, and was so poor-looking, I told her I 'd ask the ladies for her." And Katrine looked round quite anxiously herself upon the three girls, remembering her *protégée* with the anxious face outside. "They are very cheap, too, — only ten cents apiece, and nicely made"; and Katrine held out a specimen she had brought up with her.

Christine came forward and took it in her hand.

"How *can* you, Chris?" cried Milly, in a disgusted tone. "*I* would n't touch the things; just as likely as not they are full of small-pox."

"Oh, miss, the child is as tidy a child as you could find anywheres," protested the servant-girl.

"Bring her up here," said Christine suddenly.

"Now, Christine —" began Milly; which plaint Christine cut short with: "Have you any objections, Alice?"

And Alice Weymouth, who had faced worse diseases than the small-pox in that ten months' service of hers in a Baltimore hospital, answered readily, "Not the

slightest objection." So up she came, this "speck of a girl," with her basket filled with holders. Red, blue, green, and yellow, — all the colors of the rainbow, in patch and piece, and every odd bit one sees in a scrap-bag, were displayed in that basket. And the owner thereof was, as Katrine had said, "as tidy a child as you could find anywheres."

"Ten cents apiece, did you say? Well, I 'm sure that 's cheap enough," said Christine, taking up first one and then another, to Milly's evident disgust. "And did your mother make them?" Christine went on; and hearing a little hoarse affirmative, she dropped the holders to pounce upon the small blue hand; and, declaring it was like a lump of ice, to lead the rest of the small, blue bit of humanity to the great blazing fire in the grate.

"There, my dear, you just thaw out those icicles in your throat, and I 'll sell your holders for you. Here, Milly, here is one for you, — pink and blue, your favorite combination." And before Milly could protest, whiff went the pink and blue combination through the air, and lodged on Milly's carefully arranged braids.

"Christine, I don't want a holder, I have no earthly use for it. How *can* you?" and Milly shook off the little article as if it had been a reptile.

"No use for it? Well, give it away then. Buy it for Katrine. But *I* want one for myself. I 'm not so grand as you are, Miss Milly. I do up all my laces and nice pocket-handkerchiefs, and so does Alice; so Alice wants one. There 's three already, and now if — oh!" and with this exclamation, and with her eyes fixed upon

something or somebody on the street, Christine jumped up and ran to the window. There, it was very evident it was a "Somebody," for with a smiling face she was giving her head sundry little beckoning nods, which were answered by a returning nod from this "Somebody," and a laughing lift of a masculine hat.

"What are you doing, Chris? Who is it?" asked Alice.

"Wait and see. Katrine, go down and open the door, please, and send the gentleman up to Mrs. Weymouth's parlor."

"My goodness, Chris, push that table back, and pick up those papers — do, before anybody comes in. And there are my boots, and those hair-pins!"

"Oh, fiddlesticks! Don't fuss, Alice! The room looks well enough. Besides —"

But there was no time for further words. Katrine had opened the door, and there stood the "Somebody" Christine had invoked.

"O Major Alison, how do you do? I could n't think who it was that Chris was inviting in so vehemently," exclaimed Alice, with a new color in her cheeks, and a welcome in her eyes.

"Dick, I invited you in to increase the list of my customers. I am selling holders, — flat-iron holders, grate-blower holders. I know you need one, perhaps two. I dare say you burn all your newspapers up handling your office stove." And Christine, with a funny air of gravity, brought forward the little basket with its parti-colored contents, and set it before Major Alison that he might make his choice.

The gentleman laughed. He was an old acquaintance, an old friend of Christine's, and he knew her ways. Sitting down upon the sofa with the basket between them, he entered into a gay discussion of the various colors and textures of the holders.

"Oh no, don't take that pink-and-blue, Dick. Milly has chosen that. Those are her colors," cried Christine mischievously, as he lifted the pink-and-blue combination.

"Christine!" exclaimed Milly warningly. But Christine was off in another strain, — a light, mocking strain, that drowned Milly's attempt at denial.

"There, buy this, Dick," she was urging, "and this, and this, — nice dark colors that won't show dirt."

Alice looked across at Christine, and remembered the impassioned voice that had sung

"Per te vogl'io morir!"

Could this be the same Christine?

"No, none of your dirt-colors for me, Christine," said Major Alison. "Here, what 's this?

'Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled.'

Here we have the M'Pherson plaid., the real article, too. Why, this reminds me of the Colonel. He had Scotch blood in his veins, and, by Jove! it was the M'Pherson line, and he used to wear just such a plaid as this. Well, this is rather jolly. I 'll take this one sure, Christine."

Christine could n't speak. It was so seldom she heard even this allusion to one who was so involved in her life that for a moment or so she was spellbound,

and all her pulses seemed beating an audible tune, and her very breath seemed dying within her. But Alice, quick as a flash, took in the situation, and covered her unwonted stillness with a voluble chatter.

Major Alison, keen-eyed and intuitive, *felt* that he had struck a minor key somewhere in Christine's gay chords, but he made no sign. Only Milly Davis saw nothing, felt nothing, so there was no harm done, and no danger; for Milly was the only one of the party who neither knew how to respect or keep a secret.

And presently Christine had got her breath back again and her speech, and was recommending one and another of her wares in apparently the same spirit as before. But Major Alison could n't forget that sudden minor note he had struck, though he kept up his external gayety, and followed her suit and her desires by becoming quite an extensive purchaser of the parti-colored holders, and thus sending the "speck of a girl" away with a lighter basket as well as a lighter heart.

"Thank you, miss," said the little hoarse voice in grateful tones as she went out. And Christine patted the small red hand, and smiled out of her sad heart a cheery smile into the upturned face, and remembered in the hall that her own hand was not so very large, and that the mittens she happened to have in her pocket might not be very far from fitting this "speck of a girl." So it happened that there was another "Thank you" from the hoarse little voice, and somehow Christine went back into the parlor after it with a softer sense of her pain.

There she heard Milly just saying, "I believe Christine is really fond of that low class."

"Yes, I am. I appreciate low society better than high," Christine remarked demurely; and then she sparkled away again, a little frothy foam of talk about the kind of people she liked, until Major Alison wondered if he had n't been fanciful a little while ago when he thought he had struck a minor note. And thinking thus he rose to go. Christine followed him out with a request: Would he take a book back to the library for her? and would he please just step into their parlor while she brought it? He went across into the parlor, while Christine ran up to her bedroom upon the next floor to bring the book. In a moment she came back with the volume in her hand, and with a new expression on her face, — an expression of proud resolution. She came straight up to him, and in an instant he knew she had something to say that was hard, very hard, for her to say. He involuntarily helped her by asking, —

"What is it, Christine? Don't hesitate."

She drew in her breath quickly. "Dick, I want the little holder of Scotch plaid. Give it me, please."

A great light broke over Major Alison. It could n't help shining in his face and through the eyes with which he looked into hers. And Christine, meeting it, saw that her secret was discovered to him. He had known Christine for the last six years. He had known Colonel Anstruther for twice six years. He had seen them daily together for the long summer when he and Anstruther were on sick-furlough at Bretton Beach, and

had never suspected what was now revealed to him in this one sentence; for in this one sentence there was all the love and despair, the bitter heart-break of Christine's deep, impassioned nature. His sympathy was wonderfully stirred.

"What can I do for you, Christine?" he asked.

"Give me the little Scotch-plaid holder, Dick," she answered, with a faint smile.

"Yes; but is that all? Can I do nothing else?" The tender kindness of his tone broke through her defences. The color rushed to her cheek, a light came into her eyes "that never was on sea or land."

"Yes, give me news of him; tell me where he is, what he is doing, and what he is thinking. Tell him, too, I was never anything but true and earnest! Tell him to end this dreadful silence, to write to me, to come to me, for I am breaking my heart for him! Oh, Dick! Dick!" and her voice ended in a little gasping cry, with this impotent, despairing call upon his name.

Dick Alison was a good fellow. And that this proud, reserved Christine could so trust him with such unwonted impulse was proof of his mental and moral fibre. As she cried out to him at the last, he laid his hand over hers in a tender, pitiful way, as if he would show her how gladly he would serve her if he could.

"I wish I could tell you what you want to know, Christine," he said. "But I lost sight of Anstruther when we went to Europe; that was a year ago."

"Yes, yes, I know"; and Christine shivered at this "year." There was a moment's pause; then, —

"Dick, you knew Colonel Anstruther well?"

"Well? Yes, I had known him for years; but Anstruther was a very reserved fellow, and he was some years my senior."

"You liked him?"

"'Liked him' is a weak phrase. Anstruther was always my admiration. I think in some sort I loved Anstruther, Christine, he had such a charm for me. Most men felt this way toward him."

Christine's face glowed. "Yes, I can well believe that. But, Dick, did you ever think he was hard, or hasty, or unforgiving? Tell me truly."

"I never did, Christine. He might have possessed these qualities; but I was never brought into any relation with him where they were discovered to me. But let me say this: he had so strong a nature in all ways that I can well conceive that if his will became fixed through his opinions for the time, he might seem, and actually *be*, hard, or hasty, or unforgiving."

"He has been all these to me, Dick. O Dick, Dick, it's all so strange and unexplained; and I loved him so, I loved him so!"

"Tell me about it, Christine." And Christine, moved more and more by that kind interest, that gentle, sympathetic tone, told the story of that summer. It was a brief story. She said in relation to the first chapter of it but little more than "we loved each other"; but Major Alison felt what depth had been in this love, what life and reality and vigor, at least on the part of Christine. "We loved each other": she said it in a low, hushed voice, with a far look in her eyes, and a sort of remembered rapture on her face. And then came a relation

of misunderstandings, and an accusation of coquetry. And then an account of a reconciliation, an apparent renewal of confidence, and a parting kind and tender, whose fond hopes were dashed to the earth in a few days by the receipt of a letter containing such grave and yet mysterious charges of deceit and treachery that even the great love of Christine could not so far overlook, in that bitter hour, the wound to her pride as to return one word of denial. But the "long, long weary days" of a twelve-month had burned out the bitterness and left only the love, — a love ready to extenuate, to overlook, to apologize for every injustice.

"I am sure that he had his mind poisoned by another," she said to Major Alison. "He never quite understood my gay way with everybody, and I don't doubt but some foolish nonsense of mine was somehow misrepresented to him."

"I dare say, Christine; and I wish I could set it all right for you. And I will, if ever I have the opportunity. Trust me for that," Alison answered earnestly.

Christine did not realize how much was meant by this assurance. She did not imagine that Dick Alison would seek this opportunity with untiring activity. But such was his intention when he listened to her story; and that he carried this intention out to the extent of his power any one need not be told who knew Major Alison. It was very quiet action. Christine never knew that to the repeated letters of inquiry, containing that invariable query, "Where's Anstruther now?" there never came any satisfactory answer. Why should there? for while Major Alison sought North, South, East

and West, where do you suppose Colonel Anstruther was? Where people always are when you look in far places for them. And that was so near that the wonder was they did not meet every day of their lives. But there is a fate in these things; and our own great metropolis can sometimes hide people from each other in the most singular manner. It was not destined that Major Alison should bring these two together. While he planned and sought, the threads of their lives were held in a hand they little thought of, — a small hand Christine Vanderlyn had once taken pityingly in hers, and sent away protected from further frosts by her charity. Christine perhaps forgot the object of this charity in a week's time. But not so soon was she forgotten herself. Never any day went by that the child did not think of that gay, laughing lady as she drew on the pretty white mittens that had been given to her. At the wrists of these mittens there was knitted in a blue thread forming the initials, C. V. The little wearer remembered the often-called Christine, but she wondered many a time over that V. You see the circumstance was an event in this poor, starved young life. It was a whole romance to speculate about and dream over. They were magic mittens to Janey Wilson; for at sight of them there came trooping before her a beautiful bright room, gay faces, and soft voices, and altogether a scene that was like fairy-land to her poverty-stricken eyes. But one day Janey met with a great misfortune, she thought. She had lost one of these mittens. It was a sunny day in March, the air so warm that the little fingers were not pinched into remembrance of a covering.

"Perhaps you left it somewhere," her mother said comfortingly, to Janey's bewailing.

Then Janey began to count over where she had been; and she was sure that she had entered no door but one, and that was the gentleman's at No. 10. This was a gentleman for whom her mother washed. He lived in a great boarding-house on the next street, and Janey only knew him as the gentleman at No. 10.

Straightway then she sped back for her lost treasure.

The door of No. 10 was standing open, and Janey paused shyly on the threshold. What did she see? A man in the prime of his days, with a haughty, handsome face, and an abstracted air, humming in a fine baritone voice an old Scottish melody, while he sorted and filed a desk of papers. It was a difficult presence to break in upon uninvited, as older persons than Janey might have testified. But suddenly he became aware of her somehow, and raised his head. As his eyes rested upon the shy, hesitating figure he smiled. There was never a kinder smile than this. It dispelled all the hauteur at once, and invited entrance and confidence. Such persons rarely smile often. They have that facial control which may convey friendliness by an expression of serious tranquillity, without breaking on every occasion into a smile. They are always persons of powerful natures, and resolute, decisive wills. Their seldom smiles, then, have a peculiar charm. Janey did not stop to analyze this one; she only obeyed it, smiling in return, and going fearlessly forward.

"Did I leave my mitten here, sir?" she asked.

"I really don't know, my little girl. There are the clothes as you left them. Look over them and see for yourself." And then the voice went on mechanically back to its old Scottish melody, and the eyes and the hands to their work. He was recalled again to his little guest by a small sigh. Janey had failed to discover her mitten.

"What, can't you find it?" he inquired, in kind tones. "Well, never mind; go buy some new ones with this." And he held out to her the price of two pairs of mittens, in his masculine ignorance. "Well, what is it? Isn't that enough?" he went on, as Janey hesitated.

"Oh yes, sir; but — but I want my mitten the lady gave me."

"Oh, that 's it. But as you don't seem to find that, hadn't you better take this and buy another pair?"

"And if *you* find it, sir, after I 'm gone, will you keep it for me?" Janey asked, with sudden, eager thought.

The seldom smile broke into an amused laugh as he assured her that he would.

"It had two letters on it in blue, — C. V.," communicated Janey, as she turned to the door.

He looked up quickly. "C. V.? Are those the letters of your name, child?"

Janey started at the sharp tone of inquiry.

"No, sir; they were the lady's."

"What lady's? What was her name?"

There was that in his voice which the child did not understand. She thought it was sternness, displeasure,

when it was only intense earnestness. And, frightened, she forgot the "Christine," and stammered out, —

"I don't know, sir."

A shade passed over the gentleman's face. "Tell me, then, how she looked. Was she light or dark? Had she hair like yours or like mine?" he questioned.

"Like mine, sir." Janey's hair was a reddish brown; the gentleman's was nearly, if not quite, black. "And she was not very big, sir; her mittens just fitted me."

"Well?" The softer tone of this syllable encouraged Janey to go on.

"And she had blue eyes, and was pale; and —"

"Pale?"

"Yes, sir; like mother is, with a little red spot coming into her cheeks when she talked."

The shade deepened on the gentleman's face.

"Do you see her often?"

"Oh no, sir; never but the once." And then Janey told the story of the holders. She was only eight years old, this little girl; but she had in her way a fluent tongue, and really described that morning with more pith and accuracy than many an older person. Her listener's gravity relaxed as she spoke, and a soft glimmer of a smile crept round his lips; and into his eyes a tender light shone, as if memory had lit her smouldering fires anew. Long after Janey had left him he sat there, with this look in his eyes. Then he rose up, shaking his great shoulders impatiently. "I 'm the veriest fool alive!" he said to himself. "I am feeding a dream that will never be more than a dream, and out

of the shallowest material. C. V. There are, no doubt, a hundred names whose initials are like these. And if it were she, what then? I gave her up deliberately a year ago. If she deceived me and was false to me then, she is no less so to-day." But as he said this, as he allowed his will to bend even to this thought of her, a suggestion of a possibility of doubt crossed his mind. What if he had been too hasty, too hard? Somebody has written: "Invisible truth is stronger than indisputable appearances." Perhaps this invisible truth was now forcing its way to his recognition. Perhaps, as in Christine's case, the bitterness had burned out in a measure. At all events, his mind could not dismiss the images this child had called up. And further than this, it led him on to follow a more active impulse, — an impulse which he pronounced upon at the same time, out of his severe self-judgment, as a weakness. This was nothing less than wending his footsteps that very day past that corner-house Janey had described to him as where her lady lived. But not that day, nor the next, nor for many days, would he see Janey's lady issuing from that door. Upstairs in a south room, where the sunshine came, Janey's lady was lying ill. A cold, and then a cough, and then a wearing weakness, which sent those red spots Janey had spoken of into the thin cheeks, had brought the gay little lady to a sorry pass. But she had not ceased to be a gay little lady for all this. There in the sunny south room she lay upon her couch, and made merry with Alice Weymouth and Milly Davis and Dick Alison. One day, out of this merriment, she suddenly spoke sadly and softly to Alice, who knew her pitiful story.

"Alice, do you suppose I must die without seeing him?"

"Oh, Christine!" was all that Alice could answer. Then at another time she said, —

"Alice, I shall see him, — I shall see him. I feel it!" After this she seemed to rally, and, as the milder days came, she went out again. But all the time she appeared to be waiting for something. Was it a clairvoyant sense that possessed her? What else could it have been that one morning sent her out when fever was wasting her, when a sleepless night had left her feebler than usual?

"I would n't go this morning, Christine," her mother urged.

"I am so restless, mother, I can't stay in. I don't know what ails me; but when I lie down and try to rest, my pulses beat like mad. It will do me less harm to go out than to stay in, with this feeling."

So she went out. It was a soft, serene day. The sky was veiled with a golden mist, and the sun shone hazily through this veil. Christine sighed as she looked up at the beautiful sky, as she heard the birds twittering in the squares. "Life is at its fulness of youth with them, and with me, — only I have lost what they are finding," she said to herself. And with this thought for company, she sauntered slowly down the quiet street. Very slowly it was, for Christine's strength was at a low ebb; down the street and through a little park, where she stopped to watch the play of a group of children.

"Fling it higher, Jimmy, — fling it higher!" cried

out one of the group to his fellow, as he caught the ball they were tossing. Jimmy flung it higher, and it lodged at Christine's feet. She laughed and flung it back to them, and back it came again, and this time beyond her. But it did not fall to the ground; a stronger hand received it, and sent it whirring through the air with a will. Christine had not heeded the passing footsteps, had not seen the owner of this stronger hand, for she stood facing the green, her back to the path. She had seen and heard nothing until a deep-toned voice called out, "Aim higher, boys, and don't hit the lady!"

She turned like one in a dream. *Was* it all a dream, or had she met him face to face, as she had prayed and prayed she might every night and every day for a twelvemonth?

"Ralph! Ralph!" she cried eagerly.

It must have been a harder man than Ralph Anstruther to have answered otherwise than warmly to that call.

"Christine!" Only her name, but there was a warmth to his voice, and in the involuntary movement that took her two outstretched hands in both of his. He never thought of judging or condemning then. I think in that moment he had forgotten that he had disbelieved her. The invisible truth was making itself triumphant. The suddenness of this meeting, the great surprise, made them both natural, and thus they stood for the time confessed to each other.

Christine was the first to speak again. It was n't much she said, — a half-inarticulate question, in a weary,

wistful voice. Colonel Anstruther's face changed as he heard her, as he looked at her.

"Christine, you are ill; you ought not to be here. Come, let me take you home;" and the next moment he had drawn her hand over his arm.

And in that walk there was little said but of Christine's health. It was so simple and serious a subject that it saved them both from any sense of awkwardness. But once home, alone together in that sunny south parlor, Christine could contain herself no longer.

"What is it, — Ralph, what is it that has kept us apart? What *did* you mean by that dreadful letter?"

Colonel Anstruther's face paled; the old shadow had come back.

"Christine, do you remember the night we parted?"

"Oh, yes, yes; I have remembered little else in these long months," she answered, in a tearful, tender voice.

The man's cheek flushed and his pulses quickened. He looked away from her a moment, and then went on, —

"Do you remember after we parted a conversation you had with Major Alison?"

"No, I do not now, I am sure." Her face was as open as the day as she answered this.

"I was an unintentional listener to part of that conversation. I had come back to find Alison. Somebody said he was in the drawing-room. I stepped in over the greensward upon the piazza; there I heard you say, —

"'I do not — I do not — I never loved him, Dick! If you only knew, if I could only tell you everything,

you would know what I meant!' As you said this your hands were clasped over Major Alison's, and you were leaning against his arm. I did not stop to hear, to see more. I thought I had heard, had seen, enough. I thought I had heard enough to never hear any more! And that was why I sent that letter."

"O Ralph, Ralph, if you had stopped to hear more you would not have made this dreadful mistake! It was not you — oh, how could you think it was? It was not you of whom I spoke. Ralph, I never told you: but Chauncey Ashton fancied he was in love with me once; and, worse than that, he fancied a great deal more that he had no right to, — that I had given him encouragement, that I had led him on, and all that. But I never had; it was all my gay, careless manner of laughing and jesting, that is so misunderstood one way and another. He was bright and pleasant, and fond of music, and so I sang with him, and laughed and talked with him, without the slightest idea of how his mind was going until he told me. And then, when I confessed to him how innocent, how ignorant I had been, and how I felt toward him, he was very unreasonable, very unkind. I should never have spoken of the matter to any one if he had not. But he went to Dick Alison, and poured his weak, one-sided story into his ears. Dick had known me for years; he had always been like a brother to me, and so he came to me with this. I was explaining how it was to him when you overheard me there; and when I said, 'If I could tell you everything you would know what I meant,' it was of my love for you that I was thinking. You know

you thought it best that we should not speak of our engagement until you came back. That was the 'everything' that was in my mind. And if I seemed to treat Dick too — too much like a brother, you must remember that he was almost my brother once; for he was engaged to my sister Mary who died, and — "

"Christine, there is no need of anything more. I see I have been a — "

"No, no!" She sprang forward with that quick motion of hers, and laid her hand over his lips. "No, no, Ralph! don't call yourself names. It was only natural that you should feel as you did, hearing what you did."

Again Colonel Anstruther's cheek flushed, and his pulse quickened as he caught a glimpse of this unexacting, generous love; and he marvelled at himself now that his intuitions had not served him better a year ago.

He put the little hand away from his lips, and took her in his arms.

"Christine, I 've been a fool!"

"Oh no, no, Ralph!" And this time a seal was set upon his lips he did not care to put away.

Later he told her of the link that had led him to her, — Janey's lost mitten, — and of his daily walk through the little park and past the house she had described.

"She shall have the prettiest pair of mittens that I can knit for her, for she has been our good angel," said Christine, smiling; "and I mean this more seriously than I say it. I believe there is a meaning in everything and that this little child was not only sent to help

us, but for us to help her; for see, Ralph, how singularly involved she is with us!" And Christine produced the bit of plaid she had so carefully treasured.

Colonel Anstruther examined it curiously.

"It is like what you used to wear, Ralph."

"Yes, I know, Christine. It is not only like what I used to wear, it is the very plaid itself. It is an old scarf I gave to the child one night last winter. She wore it until there was little left of it, I suppose, and then the mother transforms the remnants into these holders. And so the web weaves a link for us at last, Christine."

"At last, Ralph. How little I thought that day I told Katrine to send the child up that her hand would lead me to you! I 'cast bread upon the waters' truly, and it has returned to me after many days."

"After many days," repeated Colonel Anstruther, thinking of the year that had parted them.

But Christine thought only of the present now. The year of pain had gone by. Through dark ways she had been led to this light; but, flower-like, she turned only to the sunshine. Life was new and fresh again, and health and strength would spring up to greet it beneath the touch of the great enchanter, Happiness.

MR. AND MRS. MEYER.

"THEY are playing *Le Désir!* Tum, tum, tum, tum ti-tum!" waving an imaginary bâton with a white glove in the air, to perfect time with the hummed words and the band in the hall. "Tum, tum, tum!" and the owner of the white glove put out his hand to the lady beside him.

"Can you resist those strains?" She let him draw her arm within his own, and went in.

"Tum, tum, tum!" and down the elastic floor they joined the waltzers. And the soft lace floated out its mazy clouds, and the soft hair fluttered its pennon of curls, and the soft hand lay lightly in the larger hand.

"Tum, tum, tum! — one more turn!" and away to "the flute, violin, bassoon," unwinding those Beethoven links of sound, with twinkling feet and airy motion.

"One more turn!" and the countless skirts of tulle and tarlatan and lace had settled into stillness, drifting away like mountain mist over the arm of the *fauteuil* and the chalked dance-space of the floor.

"Pretty creature, is n't she?"

"Leeds thinks so"; and two gentlemen moved off through the rooms.

Another gentleman, — a quiet, well-bred, commonplace looking person, — hearing this colloquy, glanced up from his *tête-à-tête* with a sort of Flora M'Ivor girl, and regarded the "pretty creature" and her companions with some earnestness. The companion, Mr. Leeds, is fanning her with a glittering trifle of pearl and sandalwood; but it is a July night, there is only a land breeze, and the room feels stifling after the waltz.

"Will you go out on the veranda again?" he proposes. She accepts the proposal, rising and smoothing out the white-foam drapery. Just then the commonplace gentleman turns as she passes and says, —

"I would n't, Kate; you 'll take cold now."

"There 's very little air, Mr. Meyer," Mr. Leeds interposes.

"But she is so heated, Mr. Leeds."

"Well, perhaps I had better not," the lady amiably acquiesces. "We will walk in the hall; that will do." And they leave the saloon, nodding pleasantly to Mr. Meyer, and turn into the long entrance-hall where the band plays and the light comes softer through rose shades. And Mr. Meyer goes back to his talk with the M'Ivor; but all the time he is talking he is thinking, "I wonder if she likes Leeds?" Likes means a good deal in Mr. Meyer's calm phraseology.

"He is a handsome fellow and a gentleman!" and thinking thus, he looked up, and saw the "handsome fellow" stopping to fasten his companion's bracelet.

You are thinking Mr. Meyer is a rival — or brother, perhaps? Mr. Meyer is the lovely waltzer's husband.

That is Mrs. Robertson Meyer who stands under the pale rose-lights of the hall chandelier while Mr. Leeds fastens her bracelet. And in consequence of just such little amicable scenes as the above Mr. and Mrs. Meyer are called a model couple, a pair of turtle-doves.

Four years ago in June, Robertson Meyer led Anna Catherine Gates to the altar. It was the briefest wooing that ever sped. Three months before marriage they had never seen each other. The whole thing was ordained by family powers, like the wooing and wedding of their royal transatlantic cousins. And this was the way: —

One day Anna Catherine found herself an orphan with not money enough to buy herself another pair of gloves, — she who had bought them by the dozen and by the box all her lifetime. Before she realized the inconvenience fully, however, the junior partner of the firm of Gates, Geer, & Co., Robertson Meyer, was sent out from the East India house to see to her, which meant, by the cool reasoning of Joshua Geer, to marry her. "No father, no mother or brother, and the daughter of our unfortunate partner," — John Gates risked his whole fortune in a private speculation, and then died penniless, — "we must do something for her. The best thing to do is to marry her. I can't marry her, for I 'm already married; but you can, Robertson."

Living amidst the heathen nearly all his life, this advice did not strike young Meyer as odd or irregular. So he packed his portmanteau and started for the United States to see to Anna Catherine Gates, that is, to marry her. It was only a part of the firm's business.

Arrived in New York, he made himself presentable, and then presented himself to Anna Catherine. The household was not yet broken up, though dreadfully uncomfortable, from the new rule of a fortieth cousin's wife who was to purchase the estate. And so he met Anna Catherine in the prettiest little boudoir in the world, and she the prettiest thing in it, — a little, fair piece of loveliness, clad in deep mourning for her father. He had not expected to see such a fairy, and began to pity her as he would have done a stray kitten. And Anna Catherine? The dark-brown, sensible young man, who talked so sympathizingly of her dead father, and gave her Mr. Geer's condolences, wakened all her respect and confidence.

And when on the third interview he modestly placed his hand and fortune at her disposal, she accepted him with a feeling of escape from some dreadful nightmare, — the nightmare of loneliness and poverty. So he took her father's place at the head of the New York house, and with a patent of ease — for he was a gentleman born and bred — adapted himself to New York life. Meyer was a gentleman, I have said; I mean that in all its length, and breadth, and depth. He was a gentleman in generosity, in temper, in modesty. Mrs. Meyer was a lady just the same. And so the world they knew said they were a model couple, a pair of turtle-doves.

That night, after the waltz, and after the guests were all gone, and the pretty mistress of the house was picking up her fan and flowers preparatory to going to her room, her husband turned from the memorandum-book

over which he had been absorbed for the last few moments, — turned, and called "Mrs. Meyer!"

Her foot was on the stair.

"Did you want me, Robert?"

The sweet face with its waiting look, the sweet voice with its kindly tone — did he see and recognize it all? He only said, —

"Yes, I wanted you a moment, Kate."

So she came back, gathering her dress up to hold the flowers, and dropped down upon the *fauteuil* opposite him.

"I only wished to tell you, Kate, that I am going to take the early boat for New York. Ray brought me letters to-night which require my presence there, and I *may* have to take the steamer for Europe."

He watched her closely as he said his, — closely but very kindly. She received the news with some surprise; wanted to know if there was any business trouble; was glad there was not; asked if somebody else could n't go as well, and altogether was gently sorry and interested for *him*.

"I am troubled for the care that will come upon you, Kate, — the breaking up here in Newport, and going back to New York again; but Ray will transact all business for you."

"Oh! don't think of that, Robert. I shall do nicely. Yes, Ray will attend to all my wants as well as you. You know when you were in New Orleans last winter how prompt he was. It hardly seemed as though you were away."

He bent over his memorandum-book with a con-

tracted brow, running his finger down the page in great apparent earnestness, while she pulled out the falling flowers from her falling hair, and shook out the soft light tresses till she was enveloped in a yellow mist.

Her husband looked up, and thought of what he had overheard: "Pretty creature, isn't she?" and "Leeds thinks so!"

Perhaps that was why he said, —

"Are those the flowers Mr. Leeds sent, Kate?"

She roused to animation: —

"Yes, aren't they beautiful, and so rare! See, here is a spray of Cape jasmine, and these Spanish lilies and English ferns. But I forgot, you don't take an interest in flower varieties."

"Leeds has quite a passion for these things, hasn't he?"

"Oh yes, and fine taste. He promises to help me rearrange the conservatory this winter, and it will be such a thing for me." A little weary sigh came from behind the memorandum-book. Then Mrs. Meyer started, saying kindly, "But how stupid I am, Robert! Tell me if you want anything attended to that I can do before you go."

"No, dear. I shall lie here on the lounge, it is so late now, and Wilson has packed my things, and given orders for coffee at five. No, there's nothing to be done, and you are tired and had better go up to your room. I'll write from New York. So good-night and good-by!"

He put out his hand, and she came and placed her

little warm palm in it, and bent her head down to receive his kiss, all her lovely cloud of hair falling round him. Slipping his other arm around her, he held her gently a moment longer, but did not speak. She looked at him more earnestly as he released her, and said, —

"You are fretted about leaving affairs at home, Robert. I assure you I can manage very well; but I don't believe you 'll have to go, — I hope not; but take good care of yourself if you do, and don't fret about us here, and give my love to old Mr. Geer." She had got half-way up the stairs, when she ran back. "Robert, I was afraid you 'd be cold lying here if you slept." And she spread an Afghan lightly over him, and with another good-night tripped away, unconsciously humming a bar of *Le Désir*.

Among the callers that lounged in Mrs. Meyer's drawing-room the day following the party, Harrison Leeds shone, as usual, the most brilliantly. He discussed art, religion, and politics; talked of the "rare specimens" he would add to the newly arranged conservatory; and went through all the botanical lists with the facility of a student. Then, speaking of music, he accompanied Mrs. Meyer in a little French song, with admirable taste and skill; and they talked of Patti, Brignoli, and others; and next of poets and poetry; and Mrs. Meyer, who was enchanting in recitations, was prevailed upon to recite portions of Tennyson's "Maud"; and every one thought she was a fit representative of the

"Queen rose of the rose-bud garden of girls."

And going away, the two gentlemen who commented upon her attractions, and Mr. Leeds's admiration the night before, again renewed the topic.

"How queerly people are married! Meyer, now, is a good, gentlemanly fellow, but no more taste! — completely absorbed in his ledger and the East India trade! I don't believe he knows the Mater Dolorosa from the Cenci. And what an accomplished little thing that wife of his is! How she sings, how she reads, and how she talks! Bah! Leeds ought to have had her, don't you see!"

"Tut, you can't arrange the world to your fastidious liking, Drake. Mr. and Mrs. Meyer seem to me the happiest couple alive."

"Yes, negatively happy, — the calm of a dead sea. Did you perceive how coolly she took the possibility of his going out to India?"

"Bosh — negatively happy! Let her thank God for negative happiness, as you call it, and the calm of dead seas."

"Well, if that is to be the way, what sense in cultivating the higher needs? I do not say I want Mrs. Meyer to awaken *now* to a conception of her capabilities in loving; but I do say that I deplore the circumstances, or blind destiny, that consigned this woman to such a partial existence."

"Drake, you know what Dunn says, — queer, quaint Matt Dunn?"

"What?"

"'Be good, and you 'll be happy.' A school-boyish sounding phrase enough, but with quizzical gravity he 'll

end his letters to that dandy prig, Hofland, with the simple little sentence; and last night, when Deane and Aylesworth were lamenting the state of finances, he quietly took leave of them with that adjuration. Deane looked for a minute as if somebody had said, 'Let us pray!' So I'll end this teasing topic for you in the same manner. Let Mrs. Meyer be good, and she'll be happy."

They both laughed and turned down the avenue toward the Ocean House.

But this opinion of Mr. Drake's was only one of his "notions," as his friend would have said. The general idea was that Mr. and Mrs. Meyer were the happiest couple alive. If Mrs. Meyer took her husband's project of a trip to India very coolly, she took it very sensibly too; for in a few days Mr. Meyer's uncle and aunt, nice elderly people, were domiciled at the Newport villa to play propriety in the absence of the master: so whenever the "dear five hundred" called, one by one, or two by two, they invariably encountered a very respectable dragon in the shape of a charming old lady, with one of those rose-in-the-snow complexions, and a mien of stately ease, guarding the princess. And when a *recherché* little dinner or breakfast brought Mr. Leeds and Drake, and the rest of the agreeable men into the elegant young princess's presence, in place of the prince they were welcomed by a stalwart old gentleman somewhere in the sixties, whom Mrs. Meyer called "Uncle Warde." And the world, seeing all this discretion on the part of such a pretty princess, clapped its hands applaudingly. And so the summer went.

It will be thus seen that Mr. Meyer found it necessary to go out to India; but contrary to her expectations, Mrs. Meyer failed to receive the letter from New York which he promised to write.

"I am sure he wrote," Ray, the confidential clerk, told her; "for he asked me to hurry Wilson off with a pile of letters before the mail closed, as he wanted Mrs. Meyer to receive hers on Sunday; so it must have miscarried."

"Very likely," Mrs. Meyer thought and answered. The next time brought better luck. He had arrived safely at Bombay. A brief business letter, — that was all; and in answering, Mrs. Meyer, always mindful of annoying others by errors and mistakes, said nothing of the missing letter that she had failed to receive. "Perhaps it will come yet," she told Mr. Ray.

And so, as I said, the summer went; and in the fall of the year, the princess and her two dear dragons, and all her brilliant train of admirers, were back in New York. And then the much-talked-of conservatory revolution was begun, and day after day Harrison Leeds would gallop down from his hotel with a "rare specimen," or instructions about a bulb, sometimes bringing Rosemere, the great horticulturist, with him, and sometimes Matt Dunn, who knew all about exotics. And one day when this last-mentioned individual was there, Drake dropped in, and brought a piece of news which startled them. Somebody had married somebody, and the whole May Fair circle was up in arms, because it was the most unheard-of, absurd, ill-advised thing, — a foolish love-match, and not a cent to keep

the flame agoing. And Drake went on in his romantic way, calling it "splendid," and "an example every man and woman ought to follow."

"Why don't you follow, then?" Dunn asked him.

"I?" twisting a maize-colored glove round a white finger, sending out a diamond sparkle. "I 'm not a marrying man."

"You are a theorist, Drake; that 's what you are."

Drake grew vehement; declared himself willing to act upon his theories if the occasion required.

"Only give you a chance, eh?" Dunn resumed, — "the chance of an *affaire du cœur*. I 'd like to see you do it, Drake; I wish you could have the chance. Imagine him! Imagine Egerton Drake living on a bachelor's income with his Clorinda, my friend"; and Matt Dunn picked up the maize-colored glove, and gently stroked its mellow softness.

Drake was getting annoyed, and Mr. Leeds, who had been an interested listener, now said, —

"I don't see why it is so difficult a thing for a man to decide between a few personal luxuries, more or less, and his affections. Surely we are not so effeminate as all that, Mr. Dunn."

Mr. Dunn gayly applauded. "Good! good! Mr. Leeds joins your ranks, Drake. Give him a chance, too, and he 'd run away from all the world for love of his Clorinda."

"I would, — I would, indeed, — and count the world well lost!"

What was it that threw that sudden spell of silence

over the group? Was it the sudden passion that rang through the young man's tones, or the vivid flush that rose to his cheek, or the swift glance that fell upon the fair hostess, or all three together? A door had opened, as it were, into some unguessed tragedy. And over its threshold they saw

"A speck of fire that lit the place."

Mrs. Meyer alone seemed unstirred from her repose. She sat there, with the little hands locked loosely together in her lap, her eyes down, and a certain hush about her that was like a guard from evil.

Mr. Dunn, recovering himself first, tossed the maize-colored glove back to its owner with a quaint jest that broke the momentary pause, and sent the conversation on again. And they stayed long enough to change the tone into another channel. But as they were saying their adieux, Mr. Dunn, coming last, lingered a moment over the pretty fair hand; and then, in his curious, grave, sweet manner, gave his favorite charge, mixed with a little merry speech that clothed it gracefully, — "Be good, and you 'll be happy."

For a moment, soft, wistful eyes looked into his with a shy expression of doubt, that was half pain; but something she met there brought only the sweetness to the surface, and her gentle voice replied, "I will try, Mr. Dunn." And Mr. Dunn — queer, quaint Matt Dunn, who was always half-laughing, half-serious — dropped all his banter, and remarked, as if thinking aloud, when they walked down the street, —

"That woman is a little saint."

Leeds's eyes flashed and his lip trembled while Dunn

went on, — "And the man that could hurt her with a word or thought deserves a halter."

After this ripple upon the smooth social stream, the winter passed with no further evidence of emotion.

In the mean time letters from India were seldom and brief, and spring came with no mention of a return. It was almost a year since Mr. Meyer went away. In the mean time, too, Mr. Leeds had not only rearranged the conservatory, and established an aquarium for his friend Mrs. Meyer, but he had established for himself a reputation at once enviable and honorable in the scientific world of letters. Added to his horticultural taste and knowledge, there was a deeper passion underneath. While he was making himself agreeable and useful over English ferns and Cape jasmines, he was also in the interim making for himself a name by certain geological researches, and an eloquent treatise thereon. Then came the crowning triumph, when he delivered his eloquent lecture upon the subject before the Scientific Association.

Such a success! So modest, too, and so wise, and the most perfect gentleman, — kind, courteous, and cultivated! This was the way society went on, and Mr. Leeds was made a lion forthwith. Straight from his crowning triumph that evening he came to that usual ending of all glories, — a feast. This was a choice collection of choice spirits, however, over the daintiest viands. And Mrs. Meyer was there. A year had only made her more beautiful, — a clearer moonlight beauty. Looking at her, you would never think of gold ornaments and diamonds in her adornings, and

you never saw them. So on this night she wore white laces with her sea-colored silks, and dewy pearls here and there, like flecks of foam.

"A new Undine," Mr. Dunn observed, as she stood complimenting the hero of the evening gracefully and earnestly. The hero was eager and watchful and restless when he came in, as if he expected somebody or something; but after Mrs. Meyer put out her hand to him, and said her two or three words of congratulation and approval, he seemed to grow quiet and indifferent of praise, as if her cool presence had proved a sedative. And from science and philosophy with his host, he glided off to music and waltzes with the young daughters.

"Was there ever such a complete man?" they said to Mrs. Meyer; and Mrs. Meyer thought it doubtful if there ever was; and when, that very evening, he told her of his young sister with such tender affection, and begged Mrs. Meyer to call upon her during her stay in the city, he spoke of her so warmly and eagerly that Mrs. Meyer, out of her admiration for his brotherly devotion, remarked, —

"It must be a pleasant thing to be your sister, Mr. Leeds"; and then she sighed, and spoke of her own lonely orphanage, while the face of her listener reflected more than her own pain and sadness.

"Yes, a pleasant thing to be his sister," she mused, long after, in the silence of her room. This discovery of his brotherly devotion was more eloquent to her than all his new glory. Afterward, in her contemplation of the tender relation which existed between this

brother and sister, her sense of lonely orphanage grew, while the East India letters were rarer and briefer than ever.

One night — a fearful night of wind and shower — she walked her splendid drawing-room, full of this dreary sense of desolation. Upstairs Uncle Warde and his wife were absorbed in the reminiscences of other days, and from the servants' hall came the sound of their mingled voices in story and laughter. But all alone, in her lonely rooms below, the lonely mistress of the house held sad communion with only herself.

In the tumult of the wind and rain she did not hear the opening and shutting of the hall door, nor see the figure that entered the room, until —

"Mrs. Meyer!" in a gentle, earnest voice. She had lifted her head with a scared face, and there were tears upon it, and pale pain, and lonesome sorrow. Mr. Leeds saw it all, and seating himself near her, strove, by some kindly talk, to restore her serenity. In a few moments she was apologizing for her state. "The lonely night, the lonely house," — but he understood everything; and by and by, falling into a little conversation, she mentioned Mr. Meyer. "He stays another year, then," Mr. Leeds observed.

"Another year?"

"Mr. Ray was saying so."

A faint color stole into her pale cheek. Another year, and his wife uninformed! Then a look came into her eyes that no one ever saw there before, — a bitter, brooding look of desolate pride. To him who sat there before her it was more touching than her

tears a moment before. He essayed again to comfort, but his heart was in a wild tumult, and wild thoughts were in his mind. And at this crisis, turning, she said, as if thinking aloud, —

"I wish you were my brother, Harrison."

The dreary tone, the dreary face, and the utterance of his baptismal name, was like a breath of flame to him.

Rising, he came beside her, and in a moment was pouring out the repressed emotions of the last year, — was forgetting everything but this one passion, — and with wild eagerness was urging her to forget everything as well. He had taken her hand in his vehemence, mistaking her stillness for acquiescence, and with tremulous, tearful tenderness worthy a better cause, was saying that his whole life should be devoted to her, when an awful hush seemed to gather about the room; the hand he had held withdrew itself, the slight figure, wafted away from him, as it were, and a voice sadder than sorrow made answer, —

"Oh, what have I done that you should humiliate me with words like these? God forgive you, Harrison Leeds! My cup is now full!"

What passionate prayers for her forgiveness, what immediate agony of contrition followed, it is needless to detail; and even then, though stung to the soul, she stayed to drop a word of pardon from her gentle heart ere she left him.

Doubly alone now, with that corroding memory of his avowal of passion to bear her company, she kept a solemn vigil through the night. A certain feeling of

shuddering recoil from herself overcame her, — a feeling as if she were some way touched with some visible wrong. Every innocent attention and gallant word rose up, exaggerated into sins by her morbid imagination. Days were spent in this fearful self-examination, till nature at last gave way, and a long and dangerous illness ensued.

Acting upon the advice of the physician, Mr. Ray, now for some time the junior partner of the firm, wrote at once to Mr. Meyer.

It was early in the summer when this illness first began; it was late in September when she roused to outward life again. During the long days of dream and pain, she was sometimes conscious of a tenderer touch than others upon her fevered brow and burning hands, and the fancy would seize her that her father was with her; then visions of her mother, lost in childhood, would come, at a gentle, soothing tone.

One day the dull, aching dream dissolved. Who was it that sat by her bedside, his dark hair streaked with gray? Who was it? He lifted his head. A face burned and browned by Indian suns, and with a weight as of years upon the brow and hollowed cheeks; but she knew it. As he met her glance of recognition, an expression of almost painful anxiety passed into the dark face; but she was in that quiescent state of childlike repose which follows severe prostration, and in a faint, low voice she only said, —

"You were so long away, Robert!"

For a moment a soft light came into his eyes, and he just touched her little thin hand gently for reply.

As she gradually returned to life, he gradually retired from her presence, though always ready, if needed, — always ministering to her in some invisible manner.

One morning, when she was so far convalescent as to be able to walk about her room, to amuse herself, or to while the hours away, she took up the embroidery her maid had left upon a chair. But a color was wanting, and remembering a certain work-box, containing such materials, she pulled it out from its corner and lifted the lid. A crowd of recollections beset her. As it often happens, this box had not been opened for more than a year. She well remembered where she had used it last, — on a summer's day at Newport, and Mr. Leeds sat near, reading to her from Shelley. For an instant her hand paused, and an expression of pain clouded her face; then, with a look of disdain for her weakness, she went diligently searching for the needed color.

But what was this? One of her husband's letters? And how came it here? Thinking thus, she took it up. What! the seal unbroken! Suddenly a forgotten circumstance rushes to her mind. It is the missing letter of a year ago; and she breaks the seal. A little surprise is in her mind as her eye runs over the page, for it is longer than those she usually receives from him. Mr. Meyer's letters are ordinarily brief, and of the most matter-of-fact description. But this one proved of a different order; and no poem of Shelley's, no remembrance of past days, ever called such an expression to her face as it wore now while she read the following: —

"My dear Wife, — I have decided that a trip to India is advisable, and on Wednesday shall sail in the *Persia* for Liverpool, — from thence onward. In parting, there was something I wanted to say to you, but the opportunity did not seem favorable, and I deferred it to writing, which is the better way, perhaps. It is only that if I delay my return, you will understand that I do it for your well-being. For a long time I have seen that my presence cannot make you happy, Kate, — it never has. You, of course, are in no manner answerable for this; it is only a natural result. Circumstances of business and education have made me in some measure what I am; and I find too late that I am not a fit companion for you. I cannot utterly repair this evil now, but I can remedy it partially by leaving you your freedom as far as possible.

"This is no hasty resolve. I have long considered it; though recently, perhaps, I have awakened more fully to its necessity.

"Again, do not think I reproach you in any manner for this state of things. I do not believe that, even to itself, your gentle heart ever acknowledged its want; but it is there, Kate, and I cannot satisfy it. And one more word. You are young, and too delicately pure ever to suspect the suspicion of evil. For your own sake, then, let me say that the world is always ready to mistake the purest; therefore let me caution you to be guarded in your friendly associations. If at any time you need me, send for me and I will return. In the mean time, God bless you! Robertson Meyer."

She covered her face with her hands. It was too true, — too true! She had been indifferent to him! And looking into her own heart, she knew the want he thought so unacknowledged stood oftener confessed to

her own soul. She knew, too, how it had grown and grown, and how sudden comparisons had sometimes sprung up. Now the comparisons were reversed. Who was it she had thought a more finished gentleman, a completer man, than her husband? Who but the man whose passion had led him to violate all rules of chivalry and honor in his mad professions and madder hopes? And the other — the one whose right by every law of the land and church was by her side — had for love of her condemned himself to a life of sacrifice and exile. It needed but this to complete the revolution which had been going on in her mind since she had first become conscious of that gentle presence in her sick-room, — a presence that had drawn her through all the mists of fever into its loving atmosphere. With her appreciation of greatness, how eloquently did this renunciation, given with the humility and simplicity of a rarely generous nature, speak to her heart! Filled with these emotions, just as she was, in her dressing-gown and slippers, she stole out of the room and down the stairs to the library, where a few minutes since she had heard footsteps.

To her light knock his voice — her husband's voice — answered, "Come in"; but what was his surprise, nay, almost consternation, as he saw his visitor. He sprang to her assistance, for the lovely face was white with agitation and unusual exertion; but his letter was in her hand, and in a few broken sentences she told him its story.

His eyes lighted with a look of relief. Her long silence then was explained. This was almost joy; but

greater joy was yet to come. She had put out her hand.

"You will not leave me again, Robert?"

He hesitated, not comprehending yet her meaning fully, laying it all to gentle pity.

"Not if you need me," he answered at length.

"Dear Robert," she cried, "I shall need you all my life! I — I —" But the rose upon her cheek, the soft, shy gladness in her appealing eyes, were more eloquent than words. He knew she loved him! Oh, blessed knowledge, that was worth long years of loneliness and sorrow, he knew she loved him! Ay, fold her to your heart, O noble and generous soul! She is yours thenceforward through time and eternity.

. . . . . .

The band is playing that very waltz, — *Le Désir*, — and the rose-lights stream the same pink radiance through the hall, and the great rooms within are all abloom like a flower-garden with the brightest blossoms of womanhood.

Under a window-awning two or three talkers stand, looking in upon the brilliant scene.

"Who 's that with Mrs. Meyer?" one asks.

Drake, who knows everybody, answers, —

"That? Oh, that 's Professor E——. Thought you knew *him*."

"What! Leeds's great gun?"

"Anybody's great gun. Professor E—— is one of the *somebodies*."

"What 's become of Leeds? He ought to be here to-night."

"Oh, Leeds is off to Paris on some scientific mission. Don't you read the papers?"

"Not very carefully, I must confess. But you know I 've been away out of the reach of papers. So Leeds is as popular as ever. How he did admire Mrs. Meyer! Seems to me he ought to have had her instead of Meyer. Meyer 's a good fellow, but you never hear anything from him, — a commonplace sort of a person, while Mrs. Meyer is really uncommon, the finest conversationalist I know."

"Yes, of course Leeds ought to have had her. I always said so. Leeds is just the man for her — congenial tastes, and all that sort of thing," Drake returned triumphantly.

"There you go, Drake, with your congenial tastes, etc., and you are half wrong, as usual. Sometimes, when both parties are similarly endowed, there is too much of 'all that sort of thing'; and if they don't bore each other they are sure to quarrel. That 's the way. What a woman like Mrs. Meyer needs is appreciation, and she 's got it. You don't know anything about Meyer. Meyer is a MAN! and that 's what not half of us can say." And Matt Dunn, after relieving his mind in this energetic manner, went in and joined the dancers, while Drake went on with his theories, unconvinced. So the world goes.

But still the band plays *Le Désir*, and a sweet voice says to a gentleman, —

"Why don't you dance, Robert?"

"Because I am waiting for Mrs. Meyer, Kate. Will she favor me?" and he put out his hand. And down

the elastic floor they joined the waltzers, and the soft lace floated out its mazy clouds, and the soft hair fluttered its pennon of curls, and the soft hand lay closely clasped in the larger hand. Almost the picture of two years ago ; but the meaning changes with one of the waltzers, — not one of the world's changes, but the heart's.

And still the band plays *Le Désir*.

THE CHARMER CHARMED.

I.

EMILY M'LEAN stepped from the coach to the piazza of the Ocean House with a sigh. She was tired, heated, and worn from her journey. This was her own reasoning to account to herself for the depressed feeling that assailed her.

Her veil lifted by the wind as she passed in, and disclosed to the three or four young men who sat three feet away down the piazza a pale face, neither youthful nor old, with pale-brown hair and exhausted-looking brown eyes, from which all lustre seemed to have departed. The lips, too, were pale, — just the faintest pink to suggest a sometime color.

"Well, that is n't a very brilliant face, I must say," observed one of the three.

"Not one to — "

"To make a cavalier sigh, swear, or pray," remarked another indifferently.

"I have seen plainer faces than that," wound up the third thoughtfully.

"Oh, I dare say!" replied the second speaker, smil-

ing; "but you did n't fall in love with it at first sight I presume?" with a pleasant, conclusive air.

"I did, though."

The two listeners wheeled nearer.

"What, you mean it, Alayne?"

"Yes, I mean it."

"'All for love, and the world well lost,'"

hummed Lawrence King for comment.

"How did you gild the face? Was it real gold-leaf?" sneered Marchmont, knocking the ashes out of his meerschaum.

Alayne's honest, sweet eyes looked grave, reproachful.

"What 's the use of talking in that style to me, March? I might call it unkind if I chose; for, cynical as you are, you know I am not hypocritical or self-deceived. Did you mean to make sport of me?"

Marchmont's sallow cheek tinged with red a moment. A moment more, and he reached over and handed his pipe to Alayne.

"Alayne, you *are* a faithful dog," he said, "the only true, unworldly, simple soul I know. You might have lived in Arcadia. I spoke from habit, old fellow, so let us smoke the pipe of peace. We 'll not quarrel over the feminine. I like you better than any woman, Robert Alayne. There goes the little Queen Mab, King Lawrence. Away with you, and see if you can't finish up last night's flirtation before we have that game of billiards. You were in too much of a hurry yesterday, — no eyes or ears for anything but a hat with a blue feather and a girl's giggle."

"King Lawrence" rose, laughing, lifting his hat to a small sylph in a white morning muslin, wearing on a golden head a hat with a blue feather.

There came a swift smile and a blush into little Queen Mab's face.

"Oh, Mr. Lawrence, have you seen my sister? Have there been any arrivals?" in a breathless way.

Mr. Lawrence looked down with an *épris* air into the upturned face, and answered, all for effect, "There has been an arrival, but I fancy not your sister."

"Oh, but you don't know Em; we are not in the least alike."

Lawrence bit his lip: was this innocence or affectation? "Then why did you ask me, if I am not supposed to know your sister, Miss Mabel?" laughing a little.

"I asked you if there had been any arrivals. I forgot at first you did n't know," pouting in a childish way, which amused her companion still more.

"And I told you there had been one, and that I could not fancy the lady your sister," impressively, watching this girl's face curiously.

"Why, why?" impatiently.

He bent down a little nearer to the girl-face, and murmured a soft, subtile compliment of comparison with as reverent an air as if he were approaching a patron saint.

His hearer flushed a tender rose. If Lawrence King had been less overlaid by the false, worldly estimates he prided himself upon he would have known what that blush meant. As it was, he did her injustice, as such

men will. But a moment again, and she said, "It could not have been Em; Em is lovely."

They walked up and down the piazza, he bending toward her with that air of reverent emotion in which he excelled, and which made his name famous among women as a *preux chevalier;* she listening, with downcast eyes and changing color, or replying with a pretty air of mock assurance.

"Look at Lawrence now, will you?" growled Marchmont. "Was there ever such a hypocrite? That girl thinks he is in earnest. So did Miss Eliza Ripley last month; and so did Caroline Smythe last night. Look at him! Why don't that little thing's rightful guardians, if she 's got any, come and carry her off? That 's the way these people go on, — trusting a girl to such noodles as the Windlows!"

"You don't think King in earnest?"

"Alayne, you are a simple sort of a fellow, but you *have* got common sense. You don't believe Lawrence King's airs, do you?"

Alayne laughed. "Well, I don't."

But here he stopped. A lady wished to pass out. He had somehow, in his talk, swung his chair from its first limit an angle aside. He barred the doorway. He rose, bowing and begging "your pardon," — not like Lawrence King, who made even "your pardon" sound a grace, but with a modest reality of concern and a half-shy manner. The lady — the very one whose pale face just now called out their comment, the new arrival — bent her head for acknowledgment and smiled. Then a voice said, "Thank you!" and she stepped out.

"Em, it *is* you."

And Mabel M'Lean left Lawrence King to run to her sister. Mr. King was for running off too, chagrined at his blunder; but Mabel called him, and introduced him with an air that plainly and quite triumphantly said, —

"There, you see, you were mistaken. She *is* lovely."

A fresh toilet and a smile *had* changed Miss M'Lean. But she was n't yet a beauty. The strange eyes observing her now did not see any loveliness. "A delicate person," that was all even Alayne thought, who liked plain women well enough to fall in love with them at first sight.

Mabel stood before her, holding the skirt of her dress as if she feared her escaping, looking as if she would like to hold by the skirt of Mr. King's coat, too, in the quick, nervous way in which she continually addressed him. But Mr. King had no intention of escaping. He liked the quick, appealing glance. He liked the beautiful, peach-bloom blush. He liked the eager, excited manner, because it was all for him, because he knew that he evoked it just as a skilful player evokes new strains and chords upon his instrument.

Farther down Alayne and Marchmont observed this triad. They saw at first the utter absorption of the elder in the younger. Her face bloomed, her eyes grew bright, her smile came frequent and sweet. They thought her not so plain after all. But presently they saw a change. The bloom and sweetness, the light and life, in some unseen moment had died away. Something in their stead, cold and pale as a snow-wreath,

had come, and the eyes that just now were tender with expression were chill with *hauteur*.

Whatever it was, the influence was as subtile as the change. King, five minutes since, basked in sunshine, seeing only the brilliant beauty of Mabel M'Lean blooming for his pleasure, observant only of the sister as a naturally courteous man would be of any woman, and she, the background of his picture. Suddenly he felt uncomfortable, *distrait*. The bright face of Mabel was still bright, still hanging out its most alluring colors. Still she wanted him. What was it then? Suddenly he had forgotten his trick of speech, of smile, his devoted air. A feeling of self-consciousness was stealing over him, a little sense of shame, as if he were making himself ridiculous. He drew himself up, and bent again to make adieux, when a clear voice addressed him in some social form of commonplace, a voice clear and distant in its tone of reserve. For the first time he felt the presence of Emily M'Lean.

He stopped, lifted his hat from his head, and looked at her as she went down the piazza beside her sister.

Marchmont, seeing all, laughed in triumph.

"Good!" he muttered. "The sheep-dog has come. She 's a match for even you, King Lawrence."

This was not addressed to the young man in question, for he had joined already a cluster of ladies, and was now the centre of their regard.

That night the Windlows, No. 3 or 4, one of the many branches who did *not* stay at the Ocean, but had their cottage down the avenue, gave a small party. The Ocean Windlows and their friends were bidden. March-

mont, King, and Alayne were three of the friends. They went in together, and together were presented to Miss M'Lean.

"I have had the honor of meeting Miss M'Lean before." And Lawrence King smiled, with something defying and audacious in his eye. It leaped forth when he said directly, "And your sister? I do not see her. I hope she is to be here. We should miss too much without her."

A flush rose to Miss M'Lean's temples. A sense of wounded pride, of invaded dignity, gleamed in her expression. In a second she saw his ground. She saw herself regarded as the "sheep-dog," a duenna to be defied. What was to be *her* ground? She knew she had read this man correctly. She knew what he was doing as well as Wilkie Marchmont; and she knew her sister better than either. But now she let the flush die away, and answered quietly, —

"Mabel is in the garden with her cousin. She will be with us directly."

And directly she came, while King quoted, —

"The red rose cries, 'She is near, she is near;'
And the white rose weeps, 'She is late.'"

His face, dark, handsome, and exultant in some strangely defiant way unusual to his accustomed mood, seemed to express still more. He looked as if he *thought* exultantly, —

"She is coming, my dove, my dear."

She came straight to her sister, blushing vehemently

as she saw her companion, and deeper yet as he bent and murmured, "What did you go into the garden for? to shine out

"'To the flowers and be their sun'?"

And a moment later, Emily M'Lean had the satisfaction of seeing this gallant gay Lothario moving down the room beside her young sister, more *épris* than ever in his manner.

She was sitting alone a while later, and they passed, too closely occupied with each other to notice her observation. Some one else was observant too, — some one who did not know of Miss M'Lean's proximity. And as they passed, King drooping gracefully to the little figure clinging to his side, this some one half-sung, half-said, with deep significance,

"'Gay snakes rattled, and charmed, and sung.'"

Some one else said, "What are you humming that lovely child-song here for?"

"For? For Lawrence King. Don't you think it fits? Look at him."

"Oh, you think that of him? The young lady seems to understand it, however."

"She? She is seventeen. He is thirty. That is his pastime."

They talked of other things, but Emily M'Lean heard no more. Only that line, so significantly applied, —

"Gay snakes rattled, and charmed, and sung,"

haunted her.

She was sitting by some tall tropical plants, and as she

fell into thought she drew back behind the leafy covert, looking out, and making conclusion, conviction doubly sure, as she still saw those two sauntering past, the dark, exultant face bending above the younger and fairer.

At last she rose from her observation, came out of her brown study, speaking unconsciously to herself aloud, —

"I have the power, and I will use it."

And there is one thing to be said just here. Emily M'Lean was one of those persons, rare in this world, who knew herself, her power, and her weakness; consequently she never made arrogant estimates. Coming out of her brown study, there was color on her cheek, and a sparkle in her eyes; the power she had invoked from some inner depths of that quiet, controlled nature breathed subtly out. Half-way across the room the cynic Marchmont met and joined her. They walked through the rooms, or in the softly lighted hall, engaged in never-flagging conversation. They sat down together and Alayne joined them. The talk became more diffusive, but animated. By and by, Eastman, the sculptor, formed one of the group, and then that finest talker of all, Landler.

Still walking up and down, Lawrence King regarded this group with curiosity. At last, out of curiosity, he too, with pretty Mabel still on his arm, drew into the circle to find the fascination. Where was it? What was it? He looked at Miss M'Lean. She seemed to be talking little. Now and then a low-toned word to one and another,— a brief, quiet phrase, — but it claimed

attention, and entered into the general tone. But the fawn-colored silk she wore was not quieter and softer than the hue of her eyes.

These eyes, that so lately had turned stone-cold glances upon him, glances of suspicion and severity, now beamed with gentleness. There was warmth and sweetness in her face, and her aspect was cordial. He wondered if she would change as suddenly from warmth to cold for him. He addressed her. She answered him with kind indifference. He entered into the conversation, which was interesting to him, because it was upon Ruskin, and he admired and believed in Ruskin. And here he met nothing but the soft, kind manner, as before. Lawrence King knew a lady when he saw her. He knew he saw one now, and he felt half ashamed of his defiant ground. So the night ended with a new sensation for this young gentleman, — a sense of humiliation. It was good for him.

II.

"Gay snakes rattled, and charmed, and sung."

Emily M'Lean woke from her sleep with that line singing in her head, — that line which the sweetest of poets never thought to be so applied. She awoke with a shiver and a sigh. She thought of her depression as she arrived. She was not given to nervous fancies, but she asked herself if it were not a presentiment.

Mabel, on the contrary, woke up to gayest anticipations. The day was set to music for her. A drive

with the Windlows to the glen, with Lawrence King for *vis-à-vis*, and in the afternoon a seat beside him in his own beach-wagon, — the Windlows again making it propriety. She let this brilliant plan out to her sister while she was dressing.

"And in the evening?" coolly asked Emily.

"Oh, the band plays here to-night."

Emily knew the evening would be spent like the day, the charmer at her side, while the band breathed of Mendelssohn, and the soft summer night wooed to the long, cool ranges of piazza. She said nothing, however, offered no suspicious advice or opposition, but thought, "I must wait until to-night; then you or I, Lawrence King."

She waited until night. She saw Mabel flutter before the glass for half an hour between the merits of a Tudor hat with a blue feather, and a drooping brim with sprays of meadow-grass, ere she went out upon her drive. She saw her come back, her eyes like dark fires, her cheeks a rosy flame, and exclaiming enthusiastically and innocently that she had had a splendid day.

All Emily M'Lean could think of was, —

"Gay snakes rattled, and charmed, and sung."

That night she took as much pains with her toilet as Mabel, though she knew her strength did not lie there. It helped her to express herself, however.

This toilet is worth describing. It was a cool, seashore night, and she changed her vapory muslin for a silk. The hue was pearl-gray, an opaline lustre softening the plain, smooth surface. There was a flowering

of fine lace at the throat, and through the slashed sleeve it drifted out and bordered the slender wrist. Around her brown head, whose outline was lovely from where the hair waved in a rippling curve from parting to ear, she had wound three times, following the natural line, a fine thread-chain of seed-pearl. And a pearl held the lace at her throat, large and transparent in its silver socket, another shone softly upon almost as white a finger, and a cluster of them beamed and shook clear rays of light near the wrist-border of lace. It was the dress of a lady, and to any thoughtful observer it would at once have suggested the wearer's character. It expressed much in Emily M'Lean, both of mood and temperament.

Mabel was too actual a beauty to be made or marred by what she wore. She offered a striking contrast that night to her sister, with her gay colors, her ruffles, and general air of bizarre piquancy which she could well afford.

They went down together, a contrast, but not one to make either lose.

And there, listening to the music already, were the three, — Alayne, Marchmont, and King.

Marchmont, who had a cynical way of treating women either brusquely or disdainfully, anticipated the rest by wheeling a chair for Miss M'Lean, and seating himself beside her. There was neither brusquerie nor disdain in his manner, but a grave respect. His friends stared, but he seated himself composedly and began talking to her. He half frowned when Landler came up and brought forth the Ruskin topic again. King,

perhaps, was tired of Ruskin, or of the number. It was one of his theories that he could only talk with one; and he proved it by sauntering off with little Queen Mab.

Marchmont saw his companion's face change at this. Her eyes wandered, following her sister. They returned to him, full of meaning, of mute appeal. Strange, of all men, she should look to him, but her instincts were true. Marchmont had the power where others only had the will to do sometimes. He had both now. Her look, in that involuntary glance, said: "Take me away from these people; let me go to my sister."

He rose, made some remark, she never knew what, and gave her his arm. She thanked him with another glance, and then her face brightened.

Lawrence King, standing beating time with a little fan, and saying soft nothings, which in his tone might mean everything, was suddenly surprised by a clear, even voice, full of conscious strength, but very sweet, and a little arch, saying, —

"Mr. King, if I ask you to give my sister up to Mr. Marchmont, whom I wish to tell her about a friend of ours he has met abroad (Martin Wilman, Mabel), will you give me your attendance in the interval?"

A glance at Marchmont, but it was not needed. He understood.

In three minutes, before King knew what he was about, Mabel was going down the room with Wilkie Marchmont, and her sister stood in her stead.

Was he angry? For he too understood. He thought he was. But immediately Emily M'Lean began talking.

What was it she talked of? Nothing beyond what anybody might have said at such a time and place, — the season there, the climate, and the people; but with all her words there was a sweet deep core of thought perceptible. There was the charm of interest in what she said, too, — old and usual topics enough, but freshened at her touch.

He found himself listening, replying. He found himself feeling a sense of shame, of folly. He dimly felt that he might have been acting a little absurdly, that he might have been playing with a little school-girl, as this woman talked. This woman? There was the difference. In her presence his gay gallantry had lost its availability. It was out of place. He had wasted his time so long upon these exterior things, that, thrown aside from them, he felt awkward. Marvel of marvels! He, the elegant, the *preux chevalier*.

But as she talked he found that other self of his, the man without the conscious graces and hypocrisies. Once more in his life he grew simple and outspoken, such as he might, perhaps, be to Robert Alayne, on occasions. Then the talk grew brilliant, a little merry. In all she was so natural, yet so self-poised, he followed her lead, natural himself.

Mabel, meanwhile, handed over to her *bête noir*, that gruff dragon Wilkie Marchmont, whom she never knew how to meet, and was so desperately afraid of — Mabel, poor child! literally trembled in her small shoes. What had this huge, black-bearded woman-hater, this giant, to tell her of Martin Wilman? She was a little sore at heart, too, a little disappointed. Em had interrupted

such a nice conversation. Perhaps Wilkie Marchmont took pity on this tiny Queen Mab, whom he had looked upon half contemptuously twenty-four hours ago. Perhaps he felt in duty bound to carry out satisfactorily the plan laid before him. However it might be, he astonished Mabel M'Lean by talking in the most energetic way about Martin Wilman, whom he had met in Italy. Told her how he had lived at Rome, about their artist reunions, their Campagna strolls, and the little peasant, Wilman had painted for her likeness to somebody at home, — a picture everybody admired, and that a prince wanted to buy, but which Martin would n't sell. It was a girl with yellow hair, in place of the Italian's darker locks; but it had her violet eyes, and he called it *Mabelle*, looking significantly at Queen Mab. By this time Mabel was interested, and Marchmont supremely bored. All the time he was thinking, —

"Miss M'Lean's mind must be rapid in its deductions to lay this trap and bait it with such an appetizing bit of cheese as Master Wilman, from my three or four sentences about him last night."

Then he raged inwardly over what he had undertaken. Oh, agony of Boredom! when should he be released?

"I found a rational being a while ago," he murmured, under his breath, "and she slips through my fingers for this small doll."

At this climax he abandoned his post to Alayne, whom he hailed as a deliverer, and by and by found himself in the vicinity of his "rational being."

But here was a dilemma: Lawrence King had no idea of relinquishing. The less so as he saw Marchmont's desire.

To have what Marchmont wanted! It was a position of possession which elated him with surprise and ambition. Perhaps it raised the value of his position too. At all events, his spirits rose, and he forgot how he had been placed where he was, forgot Mabel M'Lean, for the time at least, and triumphantly carried the day, or the night, from Marchmont, the cynic and the autocrat.

And Mabel, that night in her chamber, as she stood pulling out the little gold combs from her hair, looked languid and a little wan. Emily noted this, but wisely held her peace.

Presently an attempt at great carelessness, and the child says, —

"I thought you and Mr. King would get on nicely together, Em. Don't you like him very much?"

"I don't know him very much," answered Em, with better feigning than her sister. "He is an admirer of yours, however, I plainly see, dear. I hope I shall like him very much if you wish it."

"Oh dear, no," and all the yellow hair was pulled into great snarls about the flushing face, and the little hands were trembling. "Oh dear, no; he is only a friend, — like an elder brother, you see. He is older than I, and tells me I remind him of his sister, and that I must consider him as my most devoted brother. It is very nice: makes me feel so much at home with him."

So that was the guise this *preux chevalier* took,

these the Platonic theories he urged, to give himself liberty to roam.

"Selfish!" inaudibly ejaculated Miss M'Lean, as she made these conclusions. Sleeping upon it did not alter her opinion, and all the following days proved her conclusions — and her power.

III.

Straight from the dining-hall went Lawrence King to the parlor. There, with the Windlows and their friends, he found what he sought; and it was not many minutes before he was standing before Mabel M'Lean, talking with *empressement*. Then, breaking in upon this came her sister, and Lawrence King was satisfied. Apart stood Marchmont, savagely biting the end of his mustache, and looking out of lowering brows at the *preux chevalier*. How many times had just this thing happened? Just when he had commenced a sensible conversation with Miss M'Lean, up starts that puppy of a King, and by stratagem wiles her away. It was very true; day after day had "this thing" happened. What did it mean? Was Lawrence King for once modest of his own attraction, and, doubting it, did he resort to stratagem, or was it a little touch of malice to foil the cynic, the sometime autocrat? What did Lawrence King care for so plain a person as Miss M'Lean, when the first beauties of a season were ready to smile at his approach? It must have been the latter of these two propositions then. And yet how long his malice

held ! How absorbed he grew as he listened or talked ! There was stratagem at least of some sort, and Emily M'Lean herself was the last to see it. But she did see it, though, *at last.* She saw it when she suddenly, one day, aroused to the fact that Lawrence King was using her sister as a lure, that he was more than content when it proved successful, and transferred her from his side. She had not meant to do quite so much. She had put herself up as a shield. She had set herself as a barrier, conscious of a power that, actively employed, would accomplish her desire. She only desired to *avert.*

How much else had she accomplished? Suddenly brought to suspicion, Miss M'Lean let this wily gentleman alone ; that is, when he approached her sister, she did not interrupt: she waited, apparently deeply absorbed with the cynic. In vain he "charmed and sung." She came not near him. Once, twice, thrice he tried this. When he found that it was unsuccessful, — as that savage Marchmont said, "played out,"— he came over and disputed the field in open, resolute warfare. This was better than the other. Marchmont himself gave him credit for manly courage. Miss M'Lean, too, saw him in stouter guise.

But Mabel? Yes, the play was played out, the fine theories no longer heeded. No longer needed Lawrence King "a sister."

"Why does Lawrence King follow up Miss M'Lean so persistently? She is n't a beauty or a belle, like her sister, though Marchmont and his friends do pay her homage," asked an observer of the somebody who had quoted, —

"Gay snakes rattled, and charmed, and sung."

"Perhaps because Marchmont and his friends follow her. It would be like Lawrence King to want what other people value."

"The little M'Lean seems to have consoled herself for his neglect."

"Alayne's worth two of him; I don't wonder."

"Alayne never looked at a pretty woman before."

The other laughed.

"No; that is the reason why a pretty woman is pleased with him. She thinks he must see something beyond her beauty, that everybody can see."

So they were discussed. Those who discussed them looked to see Lawrence King flag in his new pursuit and turn to another. But no; the days went by. A new face appeared upon the scene, — beauty and fortune and fashion, all in one. Still he clave to the plainer, with neither fortune nor fashion. At first Lawrence King says to himself, "Why do I like the society of this Miss M'Lean? Is it that she makes me use all my energies of mind, — makes me think? Or am I emulous of success where Wilkie Marchmont thinks it worth while to show esteem? What is it? I don't want to flirt with Emily M'Lean. I never think of saying a fine thing to her; but in her presence I am surprised into a higher estimate of my capabilities than I feel with others. Always at my best, — is that it? And yet I am a more modest man with her. She does not flatter me with smiles or blushes. What is it?" One day he found out the secret. He carried it with him for days, for weeks, until the autumn came, and the time for the breaking up of all this summer campaigning.

It was a brilliant morning, just at the last of September, and Lawrence King came in from a solitary walk to find a solitary occupant of the piazza. It was Emily M'Lean. She was walking up and down in the sunshine.

He looked at her as she came toward him. Her dress was of the hue of late violets, and she had stuck carelessly in her bosom somebody's morning offering, — a bunch of cardinals. "How lovely she is!" he thought. Then flashed across him the memory of a morning when she had come up that same piazza a stranger, and their comments about her. He understood now what little Queen Mab had meant when she said, "It could n't have been Em; Em is lovely." There was neither bloom nor regularity of outline, he confessed; but a soft, subtile charm of presence, a grace of motion, of expression, that you felt was the expression of a royal womanhood. Lawrence King felt it now as he went to meet her. He joined her, — not fluent, as usual, but silent, *distrait*. What was on his mind? In this royal presence did he feel the weight of his misdoing? Did he feel that he had sinned against her and hers? And was he about to make confession?

He made confession, but not for absolution. He confessed, not of penitence, but of passion. He loved her. She was the only woman in the world to him. And telling her sō, he asked her to marry him.

Remembering little Queen Mab, you think that now was Emily M'Lean's hour of just retribution; that she turned upon him with scorn and withering reproach;

that her eyes flashed, that her cheek flamed, and that she asked him "how he dared?" etc. No; this was not Emily M'Lean's way. She must have had some deeper test of nature than most persons, some well-spring of tenderness for every human being.

She waited before she replied, looking out toward the sea, with her somewhat sad face growing sadder as she pondered. At length she said gravely, —

"I have been waiting for words that will most kindly express what I wish to say — "

"No, no!" he interrupted vehemently, putting away, as it were, the rejection he anticipated with a gesture of his hand.

"I am sorry," she went on, "to give any one so much pain. I had not looked for this end, you may be sure; but I cannot marry you, Mr. King."

He caught eagerly at these last words. She had not said, "I do not love you." Perhaps — and with ardor he urged his suit. He would wait. And as a special claim he said, —

"I have never loved a woman before, Miss M'Lean."

She looked at him a moment before she replied, —

"I should know that. To have loved, makes us tender of others, fearful of inflicting suffering. I knew it when you amused yourself with my little sister, Mr. King."

His face changed. "Ah, you will judge me hardly there, but consider. I met your sister as the young beauty of the season. She received my attentions, my society, in the manner of all young belles. She was arch, gay, and piquante — some might have said coquettish. I think we understood each other."

"Mr. King, my sister is seventeen. You can judge how much chance she has had for judging the world, and to understand men of society like yourself. Last year she left school. In six months she finds herself in the midst of fine people, who, instead of speaking to her with simple sincerity, meet her with subtile compliment of word and manner. Her own manner, which you suggest as coquettish, is perfectly unlearned, — the mere natural result of a young and imaginative mind. You are mistaken if you suppose she understood you, Mr. King. I will tell you frankly, — because I think it is better for her dignity and for your experience to know, — that when my sister blushed at your name when alone with me, it was not for vanity. It is a grave and solemn thing to stir the conscious depths of a young girl's heart; for though she may outwardly accept any version of Platonism which those older and wiser in the world's way may suggest, it is only outwardly. The sensibility of her own nature contradicts such theories."

A vivid color suffused her listener's face as she spoke. He remembered himself in this suggestion. How unworthy at this moment of real feeling, did his own past conduct appear! In this clear and noble presence how wasted seemed his former days!

"At least," he said, after a short pause, "I have not permanently disturbed your sister's heart. Alayne — "

"Mr. King, you have taught Mabel her first lesson of unbelief. She has learned from you the meaning of 'trifling.' It was a shock which might have proved fatal to her nature, making her the heartless, unbelieving

coquette which you prematurely presumed her to be; but in the reaction Mr. Alayne's simple truth of character convinced her that her ideal was not altogether illusive. I am happy to say, Mr. King, that she accepted Robert Alayne last night. I am sure you will be glad to know this."

"I am sincerely glad. I hope you will believe me to this extent. But — but if you would but allow me to convince you too, that my life may not be so far apart from yours, that I may at some time — "

"Pardon me, Mr. King, for what I am going to say; but love does not grow by waiting between two such lives as yours and mine. You are thirty; I am twenty-six. To you — forgive me if I seem harsh — life has been a play, an amusement, which often palled upon you. Do not think I arrogate anything to myself; but we are unfit for each other. You have it in your power to do much that is fine and splendid; but your place is in the world, mine is not."

"And you will not — "

"I cannot." She held out her hand. "Will you forgive me for what I have said? Trust me that I did not say it easily or unkindly."

He took the hand, held it a moment, then said in a low voice, —

"I am glad to have known you, Emily M'Lean. I shall never forget you."

He never did. His place was in the world, as she had said. He was always where life ran in fashionable circles; but no one ever quoted for him after this, —

"Gay snakes rattled, and charmed, and sung."

The charmer was charmed into finer charming. He never forgot her nor the lesson that she taught him. And Marchmont, — Marchmont, the cynic and the autocrat. In early life he had learned the lesson of distrust that came so near poisoning the life of little Queen Mab. He learned it from a woman; therefore he hated women, therefore he earned the title of cynic and autocrat. Emily M'Lean revealed to him his long mistake, proved to him

> "How divine a thing a woman can be made."

And when he said, "I love you, Emily M'Lean," she who had so clearly perceived the character of another, recognized as well the real goodness that lay beneath the rough mask of cynicism.

"And Marchmont wins," says the shrewd observer, who has watched the summer's campaign.

And Marchmont wins.

AFTER FIVE YEARS.

THERE were four of us, all girls — Kate, Liz, Marian, and Lucy. I was Kate, and the eldest, and at this time eighteen. Then came the others, as I have placed them, with two years between each.

Our parents dying when we were very young, Grandmother Peyton, my father's mother, had given us a home. Her own means were slender, and my father left but a trifle for us. But she was an energetic woman, wise and shrewd in her calculations, and under her management we were well educated, and comfortably, if not luxuriously, cared for in other directions.

It was a large old house that we lived in, the oldest in Exham, known as "the old Gaylord House," — Gaylord being the family name of my grandmother. It was a quaint, rambling structure, built of brick, which in all these many years, — and the house had been standing above a century, — had never received a coat of paint, and certainly for the last half of the century it had sustained few repairs. The windows were high and narrow, the rooms wainscoted with oak or walnut, and part of the floors were laid in Flemish tiles, while the mantelpieces were so tall that I could scarcely reach the shelves even after I was fully grown. These, too, were

done in tiles, — a dull gray and white pottery, with designs of impossible saints, or ungraceful Holland figures, with fat, stolid faces and ample skirts. The furniture harmonized with this ancient workmanship: straight, high-backed chairs, covered with dark, worn leather, and studded with clumsy brass nails; tables, black with age; and faded red damask hangings at the parlor windows, and depending from the four high posts of the great bed in the guest-chamber.

It was quite as much a matter of taste as of economy that caused my grandmother to keep on in this ancient way without change. She had such respect for the past, and disdained the fashions of the present day so strongly, that I have often marvelled that she allowed us to become instructed in many of the branches which were unknown in her time. However, she was a shrewd woman, and possibly had recognized the truth that it is not wise to put yourself at odds with the age in which you live. At all events, she did not permit us to be ignorant of whatever was suited to us that the time had to teach. She even allowed me to have a piano in place of the old harpsichord, because I early evinced a fondness and aptitude for music. But it was placed in a far-away room which we girls used for a sort of study and library, and she never asked me to play for her, though she knew that I was said to be remarkably proficient. Sometimes of nights, though, I would hear a faint, quavering cluster of chords, which to my ear had a cracked, stringy sound, and with it a quavering voice would ascend and wander through the house like a wail from the past. It was my grandmother at her harpsi-

chord. Thus she made a protest, as it were, to herself, against all innovation by stanchest fidelity to her time.

When I look back upon this old house, with its great space, its sweet, neglected garden, where I strayed and studied, — the life so free from care, so peaceful if monotonous, — the vision seems Arcadian and full of serene beauty. Yet those were not happy days to me, and I recognize to the full the causes of my discontent as well at this moment as I did when they were fresh and poignant.

With all the care, the strict and watchful scrutiny which was given to our needs and comfort, I soon felt that it was more the result of conscientious motives of duty than of love and interest. My grandmother was a just woman, not an affectionate one; proud also, with a pride that never made boasts, she must educate those who bore the name of Peyton in a manner befitting their race. She was not hard, but cold and ambitious, with the keen, scheming brain of a man, not the heart of a woman. If one of us had been a boy her ambition might have had room to expend itself, and doubtless her nature would have been more genial in its reaction, but, pent up with no outlet, she fed upon herself, as it were, in a lonely, severe, and silent way, which sensibly affected the atmosphere of the house, and hindered us then from recognizing how really self-sacrificing she was. For by taking the charge of four children she had been obliged to forego all the luxuries of her former life. Yet we were never reminded of this in that querulous, half-taunting manner in which many people indulge.

But very early we were taught the value of money, not in a sordid, vulgar way, but in an exact, practical method of "account-keeping." Almost the first thing I remember after coming to my grandmother's house, was the possession of a little book in the form of a diary, wherein I was taught to put down every item of clothing which was purchased for me, from a gown to a shoe-string. In this manner it was that I learned the various prices of different qualities of fabrics, and very soon found that it was a matter of necessity that I should have only the simplest and cheapest. Then, too, I was often required to assist my grandmother in making up her weekly household accounts, so that I realized also how much my daily bread and butter cost. And often, in contemplating a purchase, I have heard her compare and calculate some slight difference of pennies, in her calm, grave way, which impressed me forcibly even then. For when this began I was only ten years old, and with the morbid perception of an imaginative nature I saw too that it was not meanness that caused my grandmother to take this course with us. But I did not quite understand it until one day Judith, our one servant, — a woman who had grown middle-aged in my grandmother's service, and so was more familiar with her than any one, — said, in a low tone, in my presence, as she glanced from the china she was dusting to the little book I was poring over, —

"What 's the good, Mis' Peyton, o' her doin' that? Such a young one."

Her mistress answered in a louder key, cool and tranquil, —

"Because we are poor, Judith; and unless she marries prosperously her means will be very narrow, and it is my duty to teach her how to meet her lot."

Judith went on dusting her china, and I went on with my little line of figures, wiser than I was ten minutes before. But though I understood this explanation, and pondered upon it in my precocious way, I did not understand until long after what Judith meant that night. When I asked her for a bun with my glass of milk, she gave me two large ones, mumbling out as she did so, "Yes, for the Lord's sake, eat without counting 'em up. It 'll choke if you do, 'fore long."

No, I did not understand good old Judith until long after — years after; then it came to me. Judith was wise in her way; but it was a heart-knowledge, so went deeper than that of her mistress. She foresaw, with her finer instinct of tenderness, how this constant weighing and measuring and counting of costs at every turn, would be likely to appall a child's immature mind with the weary cost of outward life; how, in "counting 'em up," it would come to "choke 'fore long." It came soon enough.

I went through my childhood with a vague sense of anxiety, — a boding fear that some mistake or miscalculation would condemn us to penury. Somewhere continually lurked the shadow of possible want. As I grew into girlhood I became influenced by other emotions, but I did not lose my shadow. It affected me differently, however, than in earlier days. As my physique matured and my mind expanded, my warm and vehement temper made me impatient of this constant care.

I well remember the prophetic words which I uttered out of this impatience on my eighteenth birthday. I had been invited to my first grand party, and my grandmother had accepted the invitation for me. Glad at first, I was heartily sorry in the three days of preparation, so grievously disappointed was I in the matter of dress, and so worried by the close calculation, and cutting off of home articles, by the necessary gloves and slippers. I had counted on a new gown of white muslin, like that of my most intimate friend, Ann Carew. But no, my fate was decided by the higher power at home.

"I cannot afford a new gown for you, Kate; but we will have Miss Brown to make over my green brocade."

"O grandmother, I shall look so odd!"

"You will look well-dressed, if that be odd," returned Madame Peyton, in her coolest manner.

It was an odd dress for a girl of eighteen, especially at that time, when these youthful materials were in vogue. But when I stood before the glass, and saw the brilliant contrast of the shining sea-green folds, finished and softened by some wonderful old lace, to my fair complexion and light hair, I was half converted to my grandmother's opinion. I know now that she was right, and that I must have looked very quaintly pretty with all those shimmering, satiny folds, and rich lace, and old-fashioned pearls. But my heart was sore with these three days, and I burst out to Liz as I went down the stairs after Madame Peyton had given her final admonitions of care and caution about my finery, —

"Liz, I am going to marry myself away from this everlasting wear and tear of economy as soon as ever I can."

"Do, do, and let me be carried away with you, Kate"; and Liz laughed with gay fun.

That night I was standing behind a great calla with one of the Exham youths, who was talking boyish admiration to me, when I heard some one say,—

"Mrs. Deerham, I want you to present me to that little water-nymph I saw a few moments since."

"Who?"

"A little thing in sea-green, with white foam for lace, and real ocean-pearls."

"Oh," and a laugh, "it is Kate Peyton!"

Johnny Carew, who overheard as well as I, gave a contemptuous "Bah!" and then said, —

"It 's that old Chinaman, Ayre, as yellow as a sunflower, Kate."

I made him explain, and found he meant a gentleman who had been doing business in Canton "for the last hundred years, Kate"; that accounting for the exaggerated nonsense "yellow as a sunflower."

Johnny's story was not flattering, and we hid ourselves away behind the tall calla, and were laughing in great glee at the idea of eluding the old yellow Chinaman, when I was suddenly seized upon, with the words, —

"Well, Kate, I have found you at last. Ah, Johnny Carew, you are a very selfish boy," shaking a splendid fan at him. Then, —

"Mr. Ayre, Kate; Miss Peyton, Mr. Ayre"; and

I straightway found myself standing with the Chinaman.

A little disturbed and confused, I did n't raise my eyes at first, but stood listening to the gentleman's voice, as he talked in a smooth, quiet way, easy commonplaces that put me at ease, so that presently I looked up. I saw a thin, dark face, darkly bearded, which seemed old to me, accustomed to beardless boys like young Carew and the Deerhams.

At first I was impatient, and wanted to get away to the gay, chattering set across the room; but by and by I grew interested and at last amused by my companion's conversation, and I plied him with questions about China and the Chinese, which he answered greatly to my satisfaction, giving picturesque description of the strange Oriental life, which pleased my vivid imagination with warm, tropic tints.

I had been listening in a rapt, eager way, when once, as he paused, I said, —

"Ah, how I should like to go there!"

"Should you?" And he looked at me, his eyes meeting mine with a curious intentness, which I thought odd then, and did not at all understand.

When he bade me good-night he said too, "Will you give my compliments to your grandmother, and say to her that I shall do myself the honor of paying them in person to-morrow?"

"So he knows grandmother," was my thought.

Liz sat up in bed, with wide, bright eyes, as I entered our chamber a little while after, and asked, laughing, —

"Well, did you find him, Kate?"

I had forgotten.

"Found who, Liz?" I asked.

"Why, the prince who is to carry you away."

I laughed merrier than she as I answered, —

"He 's turned out a yellow old Chinaman, Liz"; whereat I told her all about Johnny Carew and the shield of the calla, which ended in being overcome by the Chinaman.

"He 's the prince in disguise; see if he is n't," she commented as I ended.

And she persisted in it, in a half-mocking, half-serious manner, as he followed up his first call by others of greater length, — calls that I never flattered myself by appropriating, for they seemed more a renewal of some past acquaintance with my grandmother than anything else. But I enjoyed them, for he had fine conversational powers, and treated us to bits of travel, racy incident, or humorous and caustic comment, which often made me feel a wild sparkle of gayety and wit, that sometimes flowed out even in Madame Peyton's dignified presence. But it was the easy enjoyment which a child feels in the presence of an indulgent senior. What, he my prince! I laughed merrier than ever at Liz after I had seen him by daylight. Dark and thin in the gay blaze of Mrs. Deerham's parlors, by daylight he was hollow-eyed and sallow, — Johnny Carew's veritable Chinaman.

"But you 'll marry him, you 'll marry him!" pronounced whimsical Liz in her droll way; and I laughed at the joke, and was utterly amazed one day when I

was summoned into Madame Peyton's chamber to receive the following communication : —

"Kate, Mr. Ayre has been speaking to me about you ; he wishes to make you his wife."

"Me ! " I ejaculated in astonishment. "How absurd ! "

Madame Peyton looked up tranquilly from her darning ; said she did n't see the absurdity ; Mr. Ayre was only thirty-six, a gentleman, and a man of fortune. She considered it a fine thing for me, much finer than, in all probability, ever would fall to my lot again.

I can never tell what words she employed to so influence my mind ; but I know that, before I left her, all of my old childish terrors and boding anxieties had returned in full force. I some way felt myself an ungrateful burden upon her slender means. The world looked very wide and dreary, with not an inch of room for any little lonely wanderer. I pitied myself with an aching sense of sympathy. I pitied my sisters ; and Liz, Liz, — who pined for freedom, who hated her dependence, I might do so much for her !

All these wild emotions, while Madame Peyton closed over the gap in her stocking with her skilful stitches, perfectly unaware of the train of thought she had aroused in her plain statements of circumstances. And let me do her the justice to say that she did not seek to bias my mind by warping it into the condition it was then in. In her cold, calm way she had merely shown me my chances in life as a matter of duty. It was a truth, and I should be made acquainted with it. If I had told her she could never have comprehended the

agitation and misery I felt. I did not tell her; but at the expiration of half an hour I abruptly sealed my fate by accepting the proposals she had laid before me.

I certainly had great faith in my grandmother's judgments. Thus, though I tried to repel and disbelieve those judgments, I still, in spite of everything, supposed them inevitable. It was in this way that she colored my thoughts to something the hue of her own in her social opinions.

She had a cold, hard system of talk about people in the world which utterly precluded the idea of disinterested or romantic love. Marriage she held as a matter of state and estate. The persons with whom we associated did not tend to remove these ideas. They were old families, tinctured with old, aristocratic notions; so that everywhere in the actual life which I saw, I found the opinions of my grandmother confirmed.

In the midst of this I lived two lives, — the ideal and the real; and I candidly believed them to be as the words express, — the ideal and the real; and thus early came the habit of cynical thought, born of the bitterness of this melancholy frame of mind. Reading Shelley and Keats and Tennyson, I wrapped myself in dreams, which I supposed utterly fallacious in other moments, lovely suggestions of a state of life as impossible as it was charming. What saved me from entire disregard of everything save the present pleasure, with such cynicism, I can never understand; but faithless of romance in the real as I was, I yet shrank at first, as we shrink from something that seems unnatural, from the proposed union with Mr. Ayre. If the suitor had

been Tom Deerham or Johnny Carew, — though I was not the least in love with either of these two young fellows, — I should have considered it a very proper thing. There would have come to my mind no shock of strange surprise; for they were young like myself. But this Mr. Ayre seemed to me to belong to my grandmother's day, with his wise talk of politics and the world, and things, to me, abstruse and ancient.

I remember with what a chill feeling of fright I went down into the parlor to receive him the night after my grandmother's communication. He was standing facing a window looking out into the garden as I pushed open the door, but at the sound of my footsteps he turned quickly, and coming forward, put out his hand with the words, —

"Kate, I should have spoken to you first, but I knew your grandmother's old prejudices; you will forgive me?" with soft accents of questioning, and meeting my eyes with a glance of kindness.

He was so exactly like himself upon other occasions that my fright broke away, and I smiled. Presently I was talking with him in the same easy, unthinking manner that had been my way during all these past visits that I had appropriated to Madame Peyton.

"He was not so very dreadful as a suitor," I thought. Indeed he scarcely spoke of our relation, and when he parted from me, he just kissed my hand in a courteous, grave way, as a matter of course.

As time went on he gradually evinced more tenderness, or, I should say, more ardor, though he was never very demonstrative. It was evinced by a little closer

attention, a word, or smile, or a lingering hand-clasp. One night there were a few guests in the parlor, and he had been joining in the conversation as usual, while I sat apart; for they were all older people than I, and I was interested in watching the proceedings of my bird Dick, that I had let out of his cage, as I was often in the habit of doing, to air his wings in the honeysuckle of the piazza.

Leaning my head out of the window, for it was a warm May-day, I began to speculate upon the voices inside. Suddenly I became aware that Mr. Ayre had ceased speaking, that he had not been speaking for some time. I turned my head quickly to look at him, and caught a glance that I felt at once had been a gaze, absorbed and intense. I started at his expression, and immediately thought of a line I had met with somewhere, —

"He looked at her as a lover can."

Was that what he meant I vaguely thought. Did he love me like that? He, that thin, dark, oldish man? My dreams, born of Shelley and Keats, came thronging up. Could it be possible that this ideal love was to be found? but then, —

"He looked at her as a lover can."

I could not look at him as a lover; I shuddered. The May wind had suddenly grown chilly. By the time I had come to this point, only a moment or so in the whole time, he crossed over and began talking about Dick. His quiet, simple air reassured me, for I was strangely disturbed or confused. In the constant occupation that followed, I forgot my self-

questioning, and became tranquil, and even gay, over the new and exciting interest of my bridal wardrobe, for I was to be married in a month.

My betrothed husband's gifts to me may give some indication of him. He was a man vitally interested in the subjects I have before mentioned; but my gifts were things chosen with a womanly tact almost. A beautiful little watch, with a spray of diamonds in the enamel back; a set of opals, my favorite gem, with a pair of ear-rings, when I had heard him declare that he considered ear-rings a barbarous and unlovely ornament, — he knew I liked them specially; a diamond ring too, and a bracelet of coins, heavy and fashionable; and various pretty trinkets that suited my gay, youthful tastes, — these from a man who wore not so much as a seal-ring, or a gold chain to his watch! With all these, with the excitements of preparation, I was so active that it had the effect of delight. I was even deceived myself, thought myself happy, until one day. Ah, that day!

It was the day of my marriage, a brilliant day, filled with the bloom of flowers and the carolling of birds. I awoke with the notes of a robin in my ear. As the soft strain pierced the thin veil of morning slumber, I felt a pang. What was it? I awoke thoroughly, and realized what it was.

About the room were scattered various articles which were to form a part of my new wardrobe. A gray silk shimmered in the sunshine. A large trunk stood open, revealing glimpses of linen and lace. I sprang out of bed, with a confused sense of gathering excitement. It

was now six o'clock. At six in the afternoon I was to be married. Our arrangements were completed, and at sunset we should be on our way to my new home for the next five years,— the strange Oriental country which all my life had been a subject of fascinated speculation with me. Mr. Ayre would have returned long before, but for his engagement to me; and our wedding-day had been hastened to meet the exigencies of the time, which were urgent, news having been received some time previous that Mr. Carle, the partner at Canton, was in the most precarious health.

I was standing by the door, consulting with Liz about some matter of dress on that momentous day, not long after I had risen, when Mr. Ayre suddenly appeared, holding an open letter in his hand. His countenance was grave and preoccupied as he said, —

"Carle is dead! It is providential that I had arranged to sail in this steamer. I must have gone in spite of everything, somehow."

The pang at my heart came again. More and more I was waking up to reality. A fearful fate seemed closing about me from which there was no escape. Why had I invited it? Why left to myself to make this choice of isolation? Had I been mad? At least I felt so now. My pulses were beating with heavy throbs, my brain whirled. Mechanically I went through my preparations. Morning ran to noon, and noon to night. I suppose in all these hours I talked, and answered questions much as usual, but I felt in a horrible feverish dream. Thus I found myself standing beside Thorburn Ayre, and heard the piping of the birds, while the sun

streamed through the blind-bars, and soft odors of summer wafted in, while farther than all these seemed the voice that was sealing my fate.

"What God has joined together let no man put asunder."

I listened to these words, and knew what they meant. I listened to the words that followed, — congratulations and greetings. I felt kisses upon my brow, my cheeks, my lips; but the fearful spell did not break till I entered my room to change my bridal garments. Liz was there, pale and watchful of me. I was crimson with fever. As I met her eyes, as I breathed the quietness of that chamber, never more to be mine, the fire burst forth. In a passion of tears and sobs I cried, —

"Oh, why did I do this? Why did I marry him? I do not love him! I hate him, — and I cannot, oh, I cannot go from you all with him! I do not know him. I am too young. I am frightened to death! O Liz, Liz, my grandmother has done it, not I. I have been in a dream!"

As I said this wildly and bitterly, a flood-tide seemed to mount up from my heart to my brain, my pulses throbbed, a lava-stream poured through every vein. Then all sensation stopped. Where was I? Darkness and confusion had settled upon me.

I opened my eyes.

"Is that you, Liz?"

"O Kate!" And Liz, I saw, was crying.

I looked about me. I was lying upon the bed in our little room, and there was an odor of camphor.

"What is it, Liz? What has happened?"

She told me that I had fallen down insensible the day of my wedding.

"My wedding-day? When was it, Liz?"

"It is July now, Kate." And she bent and kissed me.

July! My wedding-day was in May. I wondered where was Mr. Ayre, my husband. I said faintly, —

"Tell me all about it, Liz."

And she told me. I had fallen insensible as I stood speaking to her. The long, unnatural strain had at last given way, and I had drifted out into unknown, restful regions of spiritual calm. Weeks had passed, and I had been dead to outward life. Where were the actors in that life? I asked the question that was thrilling my heart.

"Where is he, — Mr. Ayre, Liz?"

"He had to go, you know; there was no alternative. The physician told him there was no danger of your dying, but that you would probably be ill for a long time. A nervous fever of some kind. Grandmother says that mamma was subject to them after strong excitements."

She paused; then, hesitatingly, "There is a letter for you. When you are able to read it I will — "

But I turned my head away indifferently. I felt no interest in the letter. I cared to look no further than the present: rest was in the present, and freedom. I went to sleep, tranquil and unthinking. I awoke stronger, and with a dawning interest in the affairs of life. I began to question myself. Where was that life

to be spent in these present days? Then I asked for my letter. It was a deep July day; a gold sky, an ardent atmosphere, and balmy breaths of summer all about me as I read: —

"DEAR KATE, — You know how imperative is the necessity of my leaving you at this moment, or you will know when you awake to consciousness. I leave you free to act, to live, as you think fit. Mr. Calvin will be your business man until my return. Choose your own place of residence, your own companions. Mr. Calvin will assist you faithfully, and acquaint you with the extent of your income. Good-by, and God bless you!

"THORBURN AYRE."

It was an odd note, I thought, for such a long good-by; but then it was written in the brief interval that intervened between the excitement of my sudden illness and the sailing of the steamer. I glowed with gratitude at the wild sense of freedom it conveyed. He was very kind, certainly; and so absorbed was I in the vista that opened before me I forgot the reserve and brevity that conveyed it, and ceased to wonder why he had not mentioned his probable time of return.

Consulting with Mr. Calvin, I found my means far exceeded my wildest expectations. The arrangements that ensued seemed like a fairy-tale to me. I was to live in the old Langdon mansion on the hill that lay between Exham and Rawley. Rawley was then famous for its beaches, and was the resort of the summer. In winter it was the link between town and city, lying between Exham and New York.

I formed my establishment with considerable forethought for a girl of eighteen. My grandmother's prudence had been effective with me. So I wisely chose for a chaperon a middle-aged aunt who was in impoverished circumstances, for my grandmother at once declined my invitation for her to be with me. Her pride was too strong for her to give up the independence of her own home, however poor and scant. But I took Liz, as I had promised in jest long ago.

It was September before we were fairly settled in our new home; but the season was not yet over in Rawley, and I very soon found myself making many new acquaintances through the Carews and the Deerhams, who held high festival for three months at Rawley Beach every summer. There I renewed my old friendship with Johnny Carew, and there Ashford Lang and his three brothers, such brilliant, elegant men as I had rarely met, sought our society.

"When does Mr. Ayre return, Mrs. Ayre?" asked Stuart Lang one day, as we strolled together along the beach.

"When?" How could I tell? Then it first occurred to me that in his few letters my husband did not mention the subject. *I* never had thought to ask. I put the question aside somehow, and the thought with it.

"You will not think of remaining here all winter?" Ashford remarked presently. "You will come to New York, and know my sister and mother. They will be back from Europe in a month."

"I don't know. I am so young, and Mr. Ayre away — perhaps —"

Ashford smiled.

"Do you fancy there are such special dangers abroad in New York that you cannot escape them, — roaring lions going about seeking whom they may devour?"

He lifted his eyebrows, and his smile deepened in amusement as he concluded. I felt foolish and afflicted with *gaucherie* at his words, his manner. In a moment my dress seemed ill-made, my hat was unbecoming, my gloves out of place. How stupid I must seem! How little I knew of the world! In books I was well educated; but in the million local topics that are the current coin of all general society, which keep it at brilliant high-pressure, I knew nothing. Always ambitious of knowledge, of all conversational power which places one person *en rapport* with another, I felt defeated, and unsphered as it were. Before the next day I had decided to spend my winter in New York. I looked upon it as a necessary part of my education. I must find myself equal with the world.

My grandmother made no objection, as I fancied she would; she evidently had perfect faith in me, either through her faith in her own training, or in my natural caution and worldliness. She seemed to have relinquished me entirely. I was no more to her than some distant relative.

In New York my life opened more fully. I found that I had many tastes, many qualities, which I was before unaware of. Through the Langs I was introduced into society both fine and fashionable. I went out a great deal with Liz, who was by this time a handsome,

brilliant young creature, much admired and much sought after.

The winter passed rapidly, then summer again at Langdon Hill, and Mr. Ayre still away, and his coming home indefinite. His letters had begun to lengthen about the time I first went to New York, possibly from the fact that I myself, vivified and amused by my new acquaintances and plans, spoke more fully of myself. Once I asked him when he would return. He answered vaguely, "When circumstances will allow me." The letters were kind, — those of a friend, not a lover or a husband. I saw no particular want in them until one day, Ashford Lang and his sister calling upon me, she said, —

"I should think you would want to go out to your husband, Mrs. Ayre. When our Tom was there he was continually sending for Lou."

I suddenly flushed. I had not thought of it before. *My* husband had never sent for me. I had always been aware that there was something rather odd in the circumstances of my married life; but so absorbed had I been in my new freedom, in following out my tastes and inclinations with my ample means, that I forgot or put aside thoughts which in reality were more uninteresting than any others. Words now and then from strangers, like these of Camilla Lang, awakened me. When she made this last remark she lifted her languid eyes with rare interest to my face. I colored, as I have said, and more vividly as I caught the searching glance from Ashford. With effort I said, —

"Mr. Ayre may return at any time. The complica-

tions arising from the death of Mr. Carle have kept him beyond his expectations. It would be useless for me to attempt the voyage when everything is so unsettled. Mr. — my husband may return any day."

As I repeated this, again I caught the searching, incredulous look from Ashford Lang. He had noticed my hesitation. I saw him exchange glances with his sister. I felt humiliated. A sense of being neglected and forsaken came over me.

My husband! How strange it all was. How different from others. By comparisons I now began to realize my singular lot. My husband! I said it over and over. Why did he not return? Was it business really, or had he repented his marriage? Why did he not send for me if it was the first? I was not sorry that he did not, but I felt nevertheless neglected.

My husband! That thin, dark, oldish man. I looked at myself that night in my mirror. I was young, fresh; not beautiful like Liz, but attractive. I had a graceful figure, and a fine air. I was called charming. I was conscious of this as a fact. As I looked I thought of my mate, — the thin, dark, oldish man. Who should it have been? Instantly my mind shaped an answer. A man like Ashford Lang. My thought went no farther. I never fancied myself in love with Ashford. He and his three brothers merely served me as models of brilliant, gracious gentlemen. They were not men to carry on intricate flirtations with married women. They were too high-souled for that, — brilliant, gracious gentlemen, as I have said. With them and their sister I learned what fine society meant. I be-

came conversant with the best thoughts, the best books; with art and all splendid accomplishments. Standing before my mirror, I thought over all this, and thought myself fit only for such a type of man as they revealed. I sighed. The next moment I heard Liz's gay voice saying good-night to Stuart Lang. There was a new tone in it. I went out, and leaned over the balusters. She was standing under the gas, moveless, and rapt in a dream; but her face was sad; some deep pain was breaking its girlish smoothness. Was she in love, and with Stuart Lang? Then I ran rapidly over my memory for favorable signs on his part. I felt sure that it was a mutual attachment. Why that look of pain then? A little love-cloud, I reasoned. To-morrow or the next day I should have him claiming audience of me. But to-morrow, and the next day, and the next, and the next, — a month or more, — and Stuart Lang claimed no audience of me. I was disappointed. There could never come such another gallant fellow for Liz, — my type for all that was noble and manly.

Months passed. I asked no questions, she told me nothing; but her cheek thinned, and the look of pain broke through when her face was still. One day I found her crying in her chamber. Then I swept reserve away.

"Liz, dear, what is it between you and Stuart Lang? He loves you; you love him."

She turned and faced me. Never shall I forget her look. It was so deep and wise for so young a girl.

"He loves me, and I love him," was the reply; "but he will never ask me to marry him."

"Why, what do you mean?"

"Kate, did you never find out that the ruling power through the Lang family is a passive kind of self-indulgence? They have no will to conquer, to make new conditions; they accordingly accept circumstance for fate, and it overcomes them. I am poor. Stuart Lang has nothing by himself; living with his family, he lives elegantly. Do you think he knows how to give it up? Do you think for a moment he would consider it possible for him to make his own future? He hates business; he has no interest in professions; he is not a worker anyway. He can never do anything; and he is but twenty-five."

Ceasing, a shadow of bitterness passed over her face, and a faint sigh fluttered forth from her lips.

I was overwhelmed with the truth of what she said. At once I saw that this analyzation was as true for one as for another. Where, then, was my type of manhood that I was sure I had found in these brothers? Always had I cherished the idea of a masculine character firm and enduring, and strong to conquer circumstances. This was my special point, my most vivid expectation of a man's character, the one quality I considered absolutely indispensable to form a rounded nature. Without it, I could not believe in its strength. Incompleteness mastered and overcame all else.

After this confession of Liz's I made up my mind to go away from New York. Her pale face haunted me. My own disappointment, and that feeling of desolation, of being adrift in our minds, cut off from all the old landmarks of belief, as it were, influenced me in this

choice. We went back to Exham for a while; but there, in a few weeks, the Langs appeared upon the scene, and again resumed something of their wonted charm. Liz grew restless under it. Fever burned in her cheeks and in her eyes.

Again we became birds of passage. Hither and thither we went, north, south, east, and west; pilgrims in search, one of change, the other of faith. By another year Liz had found her color, her spirits. Devoting herself to her music, for which she had developed wonderful talent, perhaps genius, she became contented, even gay. For myself, I had learned much, but I had not learned or found my faith. I put my one experience to bear upon all others. Rapid in my conclusions, I believed that I had sifted the world. I became inwardly unbelieving, cynical to a degree far beyond that of my vague girlhood's misanthropy. Outwardly, I was brighter than before; easier, because I had less interest, and so thought less of my impressions.

After much wandering we came back to Langdon Hill, and made it a permanent residence.

In all this time how the years had flown! I was twenty-three. Five years of my girl-marriage. Five years!

I looked at a picture one day that was taken when I was eighteen, the period of my engagement. As I looked I realized how I had changed, how the soft, crude look of inexperience had changed to a self-controlled womanhood. I sighed, and turned away from the blue, believing eyes, so full of hopes and dreams. What did life hold for me now?

A long, low ring of the bell recalled me to the present. I started, and a thrill of pain darted through me. Then I smiled at my nervousness, and went down at the summons from a servant: "A gentleman to see you." There was no card sent up to me, and I thought it somebody on business.

A dark figure stood bending over a book of photographs. I crossed the room; he did not move. I approached the table, and a pair of eyes lifted themselves to mine, — dark eyes, full of youth and fire; but the hair was iron gray, the full beard almost white. Where had I met that expression? I looked puzzled.

"Kate," he said, "have I changed so much?"

"Mr. Ayre!"

Involuntarily I put out my hand, though I was faint with feeling. He took it, and the strong, firm clasp upheld me. The room swam for a moment, and I gasped for breath. His voice broke through this confused state.

"Is it so bad as that, Kate? Do you still hate me, that you shrink from me thus?"

"Hate you?" I murmured. "Who said I hated you?"

Still holding my hand, he replied, in an intense, though controlled voice, —

"Five years ago, Kate, I stood in the room adjoining another, and heard a girl who had but just vowed herself to me say in vehement accents, 'Why did I marry him? I do not love him; I hate him; and I cannot go from you all with him.' So *I* went, Kate. Do you think I would have gone without that knowledge?"

Suddenly the past appeared all plain to me. "You have been very generous," I faltered.

He flung up his head with a half-impatient deprecation.

"Generous? Ah, how like all the rest! Kate, how could you marry me?"

I think my few plain words, attempting to explain my state at that time, gave him some clear understanding, for he muttered lowly once or twice, "What a grievous error, what a grievous error!"

At last I asked his own question: "Why did you wish to marry *me*, Mr. Ayre?"

He dropped my hand, and looked at me in amazement.

"Why, was I so unfortunately inexpressive, then, that you never guessed that I loved you?"

I do not know what I replied, but he seemed to get further insight by my words, for, bending his dark, full gaze upon me, he said quietly, but earnestly, "You were very young, Kate."

These words, too kind to sound rebuking, yet filled me with nameless regret. What was it? Had I lost anything?

"Either I missed, or itself missed me," came into my mind; and in conjunction with this came a realization of his delicacy. Meeting his gaze I asked, —

"And did you hate me too, after hearing what I said there?"

"Hate you? No, I did not hate you," he answered, in a curious tone, which puzzled and chilled me.

It was singular how soon after this strange talk every-

thing seemed to resolve into an outward harmony. We occupied the same house, but I only met him at the table, and sometimes in the garden; never in the drawing-room, except in the presence of guests. There seemed no purposed avoidance. He was always so active, busy with a hundred interests I knew nothing of. With no specified arrangement of our life, he quietly took up his course, and left me mine unembarrassed. He was so much away, riding hither and thither, by horse, or rail, or boat, and always preoccupied with his own thoughts when I chanced to meet him alone, wrinkling his brows, and unconsciously indicating the bent of his mind by tapping out upon the table some intricate computations. Of mornings I used to hear his voice, commenting, suggesting, or giving orders about the grounds, and once in a while, at these times, he would send to ask my opinion of some garden alteration.

"He is a man of wonderful executive ability," pronounced my grandmother one day, as she came up the avenue with me, and overheard him as he went his rounds.

"Yes, that is evident," I acknowledged; and as I thought, I became conscious of how this executive element was changing the character, the very atmosphere of the place. Somehow everything seemed to be righted. The garden bloomed, the lawns grew greener, the fruit-trees gave no trouble, and all my household annoyances had fled somewhere out of sight. Like one vast machine, house and garden and servants were in regulated harmony. My out-

ward life swung as easily as a perfectly adjusted pendulum, but inwardly I was more restless than ever. I felt humbled as I had never felt in all my life in the presence of this active spirit of usefulness, of ability. What was it I wanted, what missed? The old city excitements of society? Would that give me contentment?

As if to answer this question, there came one day in the last of the summer the Langs, brother and sister.

Remembering their questioning concerning my husband's absence, I was glad that they should see him at home. Then immediately followed a faint uneasiness. Ashford Lang was so cultured, so fine, and elegant; Camilla was so critical. I had never seen Mr. Ayre in such society. I had a feeling of apprehensive pride.

He came in late, finding us upon the lawn, waiting tea. I went through introductions mechanically, and turned to Camilla with voluble talk about the tuberose I held, — a splendid specimen, worth the most eloquent talk; but mine was mere words, to which she did not listen, so intently was she absorbed in regarding my husband. He caught the look, came forward, thinking we had appealed to him in our rose-talk, took the flower from me, and in two or three sentences astonished me by his rare knowledge as well as by his grace of expression. In a second, however, he had found that the young lady was only politely interested, and another sentence turned the subject into a gracious pleasantry, half-gallant and wholly gentlemanly, — a careless, unconscious ease, which gave me much satisfaction.

After, in the drawing-room, at tea or dinner, driving or walking, he was the courteous host, meeting his guests more than equally because of a force he possessed that went beneath their culture. Sometimes from some profounder talk of art or science he suddenly struck out into playful badinage with Camilla. Then I saw her eyes light and her languor dissolve, and my pride was gratified and appeased. But I was still restless and filled with vague discontent. I had come to the worst of disbeliefs, — a faithlessness of myself. All the rest were so serene, so happy. Even Liz sang with gayer freedom, and Ashford Lang grew merry as he stepped out of his stateliness.

"Shall you return to China with your husband?" he asked me one night, with just that air he had asked before.

"To China?" I started, looking up to meet *his* look, which had strayed away from me across the room. My eyes followed it, and rested upon Camilla and Mr. Ayre. He was talking brilliantly, I knew, in his remarkably epigrammatic manner. She was listening, intent and vivid. "He is very handsome," remarked Ashford in a dreaming voice.

I thrilled with surprise. Handsome? A mist went over my eyes. Then I looked again with clearer vision. I saw a straight, lithe figure, full of expressive lines; a face dark and thin, but firm and fixed with purpose and power; youthful eyes, that lighted and darkened; bright warmth of color on the lips, and a flush streaking either cheek. All these indications of freshest life, while the hair and beard stood like grim sentinels of decay.

"He is not old; why should his hair be so gray?" Ashford mused on. "The climate? *That* climate, — no," he interrupted; "it is not climate." But, coming back, —

"Shall you go to China?"

"I? Mr. Ayre will not return to China."

"He has told me that such was his intention."

I grew red with angry embarrassment. My disbelief in myself increased. I shivered. Was I considering my duty?

A half hour later Camilla and Ashford were listening to Liz's wonderful playing. Mr. Ayre had excused himself to "answer India letters." I waited till the player and her audience were absorbed in a sonata, and then stole out. The light streamed from the library, but it was not there I meant to go. My head ached; the odors of dead flowers in the parlor were stifling. Let me breathe the odor of living ones; let the cool breeze of the garden and the friendly dark give me healing and calm, I thought. I got no further than the veranda. The night was warm, and rainy winds blew round the vines and drenched my hair with balmy moisture. I leaned back for rest, and a glass door slipped its bolt and sprung inward. I was falling, when a hand caught me, drew me in, and secured the fastening again at a breath.

"Where have you been, Kate, into the rain? You are quite wet."

My husband peered into my face as he spoke with an intent expression. What I answered I do not know. I only know his expression grew kindly and troubled.

"What is the matter? Are you ill, child?" he questioned.

"Are you going to China?" I asked, instead of replying, in a blank, dazed way.

"To China? Who has told you that I was going?"

"Mr. Lang."

He turned away, and began sealing a letter, his face preoccupied as he said, —

"Yes, we were talking about China this morning. I am to take his brother Stuart with me when I return."

The late lilies sent up all at once a load of heavy incense from their damp, dark beds without. I seemed to scent the odors of the Orient, and my heart beat hurriedly. I sighed and shivered.

He glanced up, left his letters, and stood before me.

"What is it, Kate, — what is it you want, poor child?"

I met his look. The lips curved with pain, but there was something in the darkening eyes that held me, that gave me power to speak.

"I want to go to China."

He started back. "You! Why do you want to go to China?"

There was fever in my veins. I must speak. It was like an expiation; so wildly, vehemently I burst out, though low enough of tone, —

"Why? Because I love you, I love you! You may have ceased to love me, you may have learned to repent of your hasty marriage long ago; but I — I — oh, cannot you forgive me?"

"Forgiveness! don't talk of forgiveness. Kate, my Kate, this pays for all the pain!"

As he spoke he took me to his breast, and there I laid my love, and every wild regret and nameless bitterness. There I found my faith again, and with it more than my old ideal.

"And shall I go to China?"

"If I go; but if I do not go, Kate?"

"Is there, then, no necessity?"

"None now."

Yes, I understood: all the delicacy, the generous reserve, the tender pain, — all the cross and passion of that strong, still nature. For my love he could stay. Without it he would banish himself, uncomplaining, unreproachful, from home, from native land, and social civilization. Tears came to my eyes. Ah, God was very good to bring me out of the dark into such light as this.

Ashford Lang was talking fine talk and critical about a beautiful woman as we went into the parlor. Liz had shut the piano, but drummed her fingers on the rosewood as she listened absently to Ashford. Camilla, yawning, brightened as we entered.

I went over to Ashford.

"Mr. Ayre is not going to China, Mr. Lang."

He looked at me searchingly. Liz wheeled round and exclaimed softly, —

"How bright your eyes are, Kate!"

"Not going to China? He has changed his mind since this morning, Mrs. Ayre," Mr. Lang kept on.

"Yes, since this morning, Mr. Lang."

All the time Camilla was talking volubly with Mr. Ayre, drowning our words. Presently they joined us.

"So Mrs. Ayre tells me that you have given up going to China, Mr. Ayre?"

"Yes; I shall send Steyne in my place. Your brother will find him a better travelling companion than myself."

Speaking, his glance fell athwart mine. A light came into his eyes, a tender look of recognition dawned in the faint smile.

Liz broke into a little low, sweet air, still beating her fingers on the piano-case, and Camilla Lang sang a soft second; but her brother talked in undertones to my husband. My husband! I looked at them both there with clear eyes.

I remembered my verdict in the past. A brilliant, gracious gentleman; and that thin, dark, oldish man. It was still there. A brilliant, gracious gentleman was Ashford Lang, and my husband was thin and dark and oldish. But did Thorburn Ayre lack any grace or charm as he stood beside the other?

Not one. Ashford Lang had recognized his power; Camilla had roused from her languor into appreciation; and I — I had realized more than my ideal in this thin, dark, oldish man. Johnny Carew's Chinaman was my first, my only love.

"You will never care to go to China now," said Ashford Lang, in a low tone to me, as we said good-night.

"Never, — why?"

"Because you have found your world. I congratulate you, Mrs. Ayre." He bent over my hand, and his glance was expressive, but no longer searching. He had read my life correctly from page to page, the last as clearly as the first. "He is what I hoped to be years ago," he went on, with a melancholy wistfulness, — "a man to conquer circumstance. Good-night, Mrs. Ayre."

JOHN ECCLESTON'S THANKSGIVING.

I.

THE November night was settling down darkly and coldly when John Eccleston came out from the little dingy office where he had just finished his day's work. His day's work! It was an odd phrase to apply to John Eccleston, because in no way did labor of any kind ever seem to have any fit connection with him. And now, as he emerged from the low lintel, after three years of this dull servitude, it appeared to fit him as little as it had three years before, when life with him was at its highest ebb of ease and pleasure.

Looking at him, you thought of him, "to endless pleasure heir," so bright, and blithe, and full of gracious youth did he appear; and now, as he came out of the little dingy office, though his garments were slightly rough of texture, and certainly wanting in fashionable freshness and finish, yet his air was that of a debonair gentleman, and he hummed lightly a strain from Der Freischutz, as if only last night he had come from some stately feast where the horns and harps had set the enchanted hours to music. But it was many, many nights, so many that he had ceased to count them, since John Eccleston had sat at a feast and listened to festal music; and even now, as he hums the brilliant aria with that

debonair manner, he is thinking very sadly and sorrowfully of a small home where nothing brilliant ever enters save it may be his own brilliant presence.

He observes the holiday merriment, and hears the gay laughter about him as he enters upon the wider thoroughfares, and he thinks painfully and bitterly how far away it all is from him; and then some one steps out of a splendid shop, and says to a passing friend: "See, I have bought this lovely little Como of Valsi's for Alice. It 's Alice's birthday this Thanksgiving, you see, and I wanted something specially rare."

A fresh pang struck John Eccleston as he heard. He knew of another Alice, whose birthday came upon this Thanksgiving too, and he had nothing to give her, not even one of those pretty colored lithographs hanging in the window there, and this man, talking so happily with his friend, could carry home Valsi's lovely Lake of Como. How late it was since he, too, could have carried home to his Alice the most expensive work of art! Still, with these sad and bitter thoughts, he kept on humming unconsciously that strain of Der Freischutz. And humming thus, he caught the observation of a gentleman who was walking down the street.

"What! Is it you, Eccleston? I have n't seen you for an age. Where have you kept yourself?"

And saying this, he joined him with a hearty eagerness of manner which bespoke real pleasure at the meeting. Turning the corner of a street, they came upon a house whose one bow-window shed out a bright, curtainless radiance upon the night; and looking in,

you saw a pleasant room, full of pictures and all manner of delightful and charming things.

"Here we are now, Eccleston," exclaimed his companion; "and you must come in for a minute, and see a new picture I have."

It was early; Alice would not expect him for half an hour yet; so he went in.

"Come round this side — there now, with this light — and tell me honestly what you think of it when you 're ready."

There was a pause. In it the host watched his guest's face with eager scrutiny. But he was so eager he could not keep silent long.

"Well," he presently exclaimed, "do you recognize it?"

"Yes; it is a copy of that loveliest head of all those lovely fancy heads of Rosalba Carriera in the Dresden Gallery. But though I recognize, I must tell you frankly I don't like the copy."

"Well, where is the fault? I see there is a fault, a want, or something, but it is so intangible I did n't know but it might be in my remembrance."

Eccleston, with his eyes still on the picture, sat down absently at the little table standing before it, and in the same apparently absent manner took up a pencil that lay upon a sheet of drawing paper, and with a free hand and a dreamy eye fell to sketching. A few strokes, bold and firm, and he held it up for inspection.

"That is what I mean. Do you see it?"

The other uttered an exclamation of delighted satisfaction; and no wonder. His doubts were all cleared

in an instant. He had not mistaken his first impression. Here was the solving of the difficulty; and just a few lines by this amateur on a piece of white paper had wrought the miracle, had given to that loveliest head its wonderful airy pose, which the finished copy lacked.

"Eccleston, how *did* you catch it?"

"Oh, I have spent hours in that particular room before that particular picture, and it was this very lift of the head, and that matchless setting on of the throat, which impressed me most."

"I wish that something might be done to this, but I suppose —"

"No," interrupted Eccleston quickly and decisively; "nothing could be done to this. It is in the first drawing that the whole aerial grace and spirit are fixed."

Clarke Steyner, as he listened, speculated curiously, as he had done many a time before, about this John Eccleston, and wished he knew more about him. A year ago he had met him at an artist's exhibition. If he remembered rightly, Valsi himself had introduced them; and he had learned then that he was a bookkeeper at Warde & Slido's, and a fine judge of pictures, — "a man of unerring taste," according to Valsi; and he had never learned anything more. They had met in print-shops, studios, and exhibitions, until a sort of acquaintance had been established through their mutual admiration of art, and Steyner had proved him to be, indeed, "a man of unerring taste." But how did this man, with all his various cultivation and travelled lore, appear here in the counting-room of an importer? He could not answer this question. Who could? Who

knew anything more of him than what he knew? He seemed to have no intimate friends, no places of visiting; yet he was a gentleman to grace any society, was Clarke Steyner's verdict as he came to know him better. And as Eccleston sat there after his critique of the picture, talking still of art with that debonair manner, his entertainer puzzled himself again and again with these thoughts. But a city clock struck the hour.

"Bless my soul, how the time has gone!" And Eccleston rose hastily.

"Stay and take a cup of tea with me. I 'm an old bachelor, you know, and like my cup of tea."

"No, thank you; my wife will be waiting for me."

Steyner started almost visibly with the sudden surprise he felt. It had never occurred to him that John Eccleston had a wife; and the fact struck him oddly and curiously, making a new combination of circumstances. His wife! Steyner looked at the rather shabby coat of his guest, and wondered what manner of home it could be with this clerk on a small salary, who was yet like a young prince in disguise.

"Come again, come in at any time," he invited Eccleston cordially, following him to the door; but he noticed that Eccleston, in replying, did not reciprocate the invitation.

II.

It was a contrast to step from the spacious room, with all its elegant appointments, where Clarke Steyner

had entertained him, to the low-ceiled little apartment where his wife awaited him; and John Eccleston felt it bitterly. But he entered with a gay smile and an apology for his lateness; and Alice answered as brightly, —

"Oh, you 've been to see that Mr. Steyner whom you like so much. I 'm glad you went. No, I have not been waiting long."

And ringing the bell for their one little maid, she took her place at the table. She was an elegant, high-bred young creature, was this Alice Eccleston, looking quite as much like a princess in disguise as her husband did like the prince; but it was pretty to see them both in this simple, narrow room, and over this simple table; they were so sparkling and cheery in their air and talk, carrying with them all the time a consciousness of something too fine and rare to be overborne by the meagreness of their surroundings. He told her all about his call upon "that Mr. Steyner," about the picture and its deficiency, and showed her upon a fresh piece of paper, by a few touches, what the figure had lacked, and how he had recalled it. And then they, too, fell to talking about art in much the same manner as he had talked with Clarke Steyner.

"Has Mr. Steyner ever seen the Violante?" And asking the question, Mrs. Eccleston glanced up at a beautiful half-length, with a peculiarly *spirituelle* head, which hung over the mantle.

"Oh yes, he must, if he has been in the Dresden Gallery."

"Ah, I forgot." Then, after a moment's musing pause, "He would appreciate your copy, John."

The next moment she blushed scarlet at the sudden color that came into her husband's cheek, and the expression of startled surprise that crossed his face. But immediately he drained the contents of his cup, and said brightly, almost gayly, —

"Ah, well, we don't want any company, do we, Ally?"

And immediately her own face reflected his.

"Oh no, I 'm sure *I* don't; it is quite enough for my selfishness to have Mr. John Eccleston all to myself." And into Mrs. Alice's deep, tender eyes there stole a softness which made the playful laugh a little suspicious.

"So you won't go to Lady Russell's reception to-night, or to Mrs. Ap-Glydon's ball afterward? You prefer the society of a dull fellow who has been running to seed for the last three years — eh, Mrs. Eccleston?"

There was a brilliant smile on his face, and a light, jocose tone to his voice to fit these words; but in his eyes there was a watchful anxiety all the time. And her whole manner was just as airy and sportive as she replied, —

"I 'd thank you not to abuse my preference, sir. Mr. John Eccleston, after three years of seediness, is more to my taste than those prosy Englishmen at Lady Russell's and all those witty Ap-Glydons put together. Then I 've worn out parties. I've got beyond them, you see," nodding at him archly, and with an indescribable air of *espièglerie*.

He laughed. "At the age of twenty-five, madam, you prepare yourself to renounce the vanities of the world. Where are the mob-caps? Where —" But

he got no further. All their airy talk came to an end as the little maid, Kitty, thrust herself excitedly into the room.

"Shure, marm, it 's the pipes has bust agin, and the water is a-runnin' all over the floor. I tould the man how it would be whin he put thim chape fixins in, but he would n't heed me, bad luck to him!"

The color rushed into Mrs. Eccleston's delicate cheek, and her first thought was, "I wish it had happened before John came home." But John was already laughing gayly over it; and, laughing, followed Kitty into the tiny kitchen, where he set himself to the task of remedying the mischief till better help could be summoned. He whistled and hummed in gay good-humor over his work, now and then making odd little jests, or, with some quiet fun, calling out the quaint oddity of their odd little maid, until Mrs. Alice herself could not help but laugh in real merriment. And no sooner was this matter of mending over than Kitty found a dozen other things awry, — those perplexing leaks and cracks and breakages which are forever occurring in a household. And to their repairing, this "young prince" set himself as easily as if all his life he had been accustomed to their doing and undoing. And Alice, overlooking, laughed lightly over his blunders, or applauded his success. You would have presumed them at once to be without a shadow of care upon their lives; but the presumption would never have been more incorrect.

Instead, the shadow of more than care perpetually hung over them. Much as John Eccleston loved his

wife, and much as she loved him, there was a fatal want of understanding between them. Married five years ago in Paris, where they had met for the first time in the same year of their marriage, they had lived for two years a charmed life of continental travel. At the end of the two years John Eccleston, as honorable and open as the day, found himself, by the villany of others, at the end of what he imagined perhaps an endless fortune. Instead of turning his great talent — yes, let us frankly say genius — to the use for which it was destined, instead of going to work as an artist, and painting pictures for his daily bread, by some curious want of self-knowledge he looked upon himself as wholly unfit and unworthy for the work, and with this underrating he set his face against all the great company of painters to which he rightfully belonged, and, coming back to his native land, cast about him for other work.

His father had lived abroad so many years that the son found he was a stranger in this native land, with no near or far ties of blood to take up the dropped links. His wife's family was in the same isolated condition. What associations, then, were there to bring him, this fastidious, cultivated gentleman, fitting employment? Not one. So it happened that out of his pride and his humility, he came down to the place of bookkeeper in the small house of Warde & Slido, importers of china. It was a hard coming down for both of them; but harder for John, who was full of all kinds of chivalric ideas about woman, and who had all his life been able to carry them out until now.

Perhaps, if they had loved each other a little less ro-

mantically, they might have accepted their new condition with much more ease and contentment; but they were moulded in a delicate, sensitive fashion, with a good many of the rose-tints in their soul as well as their clay-coloring, so it was impossible for them to do otherwise than they did. Thus it happened that they made each other miserable in many ways by little concealments and subterfuges of affection. John, who hated poverty honestly and heartily, and all its long train of petty annoyances, made pretence of gay content for Alice's sake; and Alice, with the same tastes, followed his example. Fond of social life, yet isolated completely from it for three years, he made pretence of distaste for it because he fancied that it was distasteful to his wife in their altered way of living; and so it came about that the two or three men whom he had met at artists' studios, men like Clarke Steyner, who would have been glad to visit him, were never invited to do so. And Alice, wishing all the time that John was not so morbidly sensitive on their poverty, refrained from saying a word indicative of any desire for him to bring home a friend. Thus they played at cross purposes, each making pretence of a state of feeling that was unreal out of this mistaken view of the other.

III.

Clarke Steyner sat for a long time, forgetting his bachelor's tea, after Eccleston had gone, looking at the sketch upon the table, — and sitting there, Valsi him-

self came in. Steyner, telling him of his call, handed him the paper.

"You don't mean that young Eccleston did this?"

"I do."

"Then what in Heaven's name does he burrow down there in that counting-room for?"

"Just what I'd like to know," returned Steyner animatedly.

Valsi mused a while longer over the little sketch, sitting with his chin dropped into his hand. By and by, in a musing tone, —

"Why don't Warde & Slido send him to Europe for the firm? Then some of you might give him a commission. I'd like to see what he'd make of the Christo della Moneta."

Steyner lifted his head with a sudden, quick movement, but said nothing; but he had evidently got a new thought which fitted an old one. He brooded over it with his tea. He smoked it in his after-supper pipe. He slept and dreamed upon it. The next morning, meeting young Slido at the bank, was it accident that set him talking of Eccleston to him? It was careful talk, not too interested; but through it he discovered what he wanted to know, — that John Eccleston was invaluable as a reliable clerk, but that Warde & Slido could not afford to send another man to Europe, Warde himself being already there.

"He'd make an excellent buyer, for he has, besides an artist taste, a knowledge of the wants of the people. I wish we could afford to send him; but we are a new house, you know, and our capital isn't large," communicated Slido.

Steyner went home with a "bee in his bonnet." "Tom will do it," he said to himself, "on my suggestion, and I'll take the responsibility. It's the very thing."

Tom was his brother-in-law, an extensive importer of china; so it is easy to see where the bee buzzed.

He was right. His brother-in-law was in need of a good buyer, and had such ample confidence in Clarke that he caught gladly at the suggestion. Steyner went home triumphant, dropping a note on his way to John Eccleston, — just a simple request that he would call as he went up from the office that night.

That night was the night before Thanksgiving. Every night for a week John had walked through the gay and busy crowds, noting the holiday merriment and preparations with a fierce ache at his heart. Once, so little while ago, he could have spread a brilliant feast, and welcomed a host of brilliant friends. Once he could have ransacked the splendid shops for his Alice's birthday; and now he was plodding home without a token, a tired and shabby man. He had turned the corner, and was right upon the bright bay-window before he thought of his engagement.

A soft light shone from the window, and within there was a glint of gilding, and the glow and warmth of many pictures, and in the midst of all he saw Clarke Steyner sitting, gazing idly into the fire, full of careless, happy ease. What a contrast it offered to the dim little rooms, and to the dreary state he daily kept! And entering, he could not quite conceal beneath that debonair manner the bitter pain he felt.

Steyner, like all persons of delicate sensibilities, found it difficult to approach this matter, where he himself was the apparent conferrer of a favor. So he put it off by a gracious little bustle of hospitality. He touched a bell, and there appeared such wine as Eccleston had not tasted since those "long Italian days." And sipping slowly that delicate, airy sparkle, he was led on into that region of enchantment, where Art alone reigns, by the skilful suggestions of his host. Either the delicate influence of the wine, or the magnetism of his companion, or it may be both together, carried him so far away from the present ills and narrowness of his lot that he gave himself up fully to the charm, and stood revealed to Steyner at his full measurement of manly breadth and culture. How rich that hour was! With what happy gayety he talked of some things, with what tender reverence of others, and accompanied always with an appreciation as rare as it was genial and delighted. But the hour passed; a neighboring clock struck, and recalled the present. The old pain returned, and its shadow stole into his face. The wine had lost its flavor, the fire no longer sent out warmth and radiance; there was the chill of a cold reality about everything. What right had he to be sitting here sunning himself in an atmosphere of ease and indulgence, — what right, while in the little lonely house his Alice waited for him? He rose with a sigh that was half a shudder; and it was then that Steyner began to speak. Just a few words, but of what import! — a few words modestly spoken, deprecating all generosity, as one might ask instead of giving.

A great red flush rose to Eccleston's cheek. Steyner, seeing it, mistook the cause. He had been abrupt and patronizing in his offer, perhaps, was his instantaneous thought. As if Clarke Steyner, the gentlest soul alive, could have been abrupt or patronizing!

"I beg your pardon," he began, "if I have seemed —"

And then Eccleston found his tongue. "You have seemed nothing but what is most delicate and kind," he interrupted.

The flush died away, and almost a pallor succeeded, as in a few brief words he gave his acceptance and thanks. The words were so simple they might have sounded cold but for the warmth of his eyes, the intensity of his tone; and the clasp of his hand, as he said "Good-night," had in it so much meaning that Clarke Steyner in a moment recognized a great deal — not all — of the sad, sore struggle of these years of deprivation.

IV.

The little table was set in the little room, a fire burned in the grate, and the one picture, the lovely Violante, smiled down from the wall in the evening light as Eccleston entered. Alice, sitting in abstraction over a book, glanced up with a quick smile, but the smile chased a shadow.

"How bright you look, John! Have you been to see Mr. Steyner?" she asked.

"Yes, I have been to see Mr. Steyner, Alice."

There was something in his voice which Alice could not understand; something in his eyes, too, — a soft sparkle she could understand as little. She was glad for him to have such pleasure with Mr. Steyner; but there came to her, as there will to the most generous sometimes, a little pang of loneliness at the contrast of this pleasure. She had been so specially lonely on this night before Thanksgiving. The tears were in her eyes a moment ago at the thought of other days, and the obscure uncertainty of the present. She had ached for sympathy and consolation; for somebody to comprehend her mood, to say some tenderer word than usual, to look some sweeter look. But she was very glad that John had had his pleasure, and yet, — and yet there lurked that slender thread of pain. He sat down at table, keeping still that soft sparkle of enjoyment, quite oblivious of the extra pains Alice had taken, — of the perfumed chocolate that steamed fragrant in the cups, of the pretty attire that set off her loveliness. How strange it was! Had he forgotten? Could he forget this night, the eve of her birthday? She tried to meet his mood as usual. She tried to put out of sight all her "cross and passion," and be as bright as he; but as she met his eyes, and saw only the gleam of airy mirthfulness, and listened to his almost exaggerated jesting, a shiver ran over her.

"What is it, Ally?" he asked. "Has this dreadful little house, with its thousand and one cracks and crannies, given you the ague?"

It was not so much the words as the light, jocose tone that jarred with the words; and together it proved

the drop too much. She tried to answer him, but instead burst into a flood of tears.

"Ally, Ally, what have I done?"

He started from his seat, and going to her side, bent over her with such fond concern that in her uncontrolled state she sobbed out some words that could not fail to enlighten him of her feeling.

"I have been a great blunderer, Alice, but I meant it all for the best."

And then he took her in his arms, and hiding her tearful eyes against his breast, he told her the good news that had brought such unusual gladness to his face, and such buoyancy to his manner on this night.

"And we will go back again to all the dear old scenes, John; and you will have your right place among men again, which is best of anything. O John, what a Thanksgiving this will be to us after all!"

And the tears flowed afresh, but they were no longer tears of bitterness. And presently, when they had looked at this new happiness on every side, they began to talk of Steyner, and John wondered and questioned, out of the simplicity of his nature, the meaning of his election. But Alice was clearer sighted.

"You dear, modest old John!" she cried, "how could any man of discernment know you as Mr. Steyner has without knowing you were worth something? And John —"

She paused, looking up at him wistfully and shyly.

"Well, what is it?"

"I — I think we might — perhaps ask Mr. Steyner here for to-morrow."

"Alice!"

"Not if you don't wish it, dear John; but I thought you — that he might like it."

"*I should* like it, Alice; but you — "

"*I* should like it very much, John; and I am so glad that you do. I was afraid you might not, living as we do; for you never have brought him home with you, you know."

"Yes, I know; but, Alice, do you know that I have not because I thought it would be distasteful to you in our way of living."

They regarded each other a moment in eloquent silence. It was Alice who broke it, and her voice faltered as she spoke, —

"O John, how we have misunderstood each other all these years! and I — "

He bowed his cheek to her head, and held her a little closer, as he interrupted, —

"But we have loved each other, my darling! Let us always remember that."

There ensued a longer silence, and then John said brightly, in his old debonair manner, "So we are to bid Mr. Steyner here for to-morrow, are we?"

And Alice answered as brightly, "If you are not afraid he will miss his accustomed crystal and Sèvres dinner-service, Mr. Eccleston."

"I am not afraid of his missing anything if he dines with Mrs. Eccleston," he answered, with tender gayety.

And so that very night Clarke Steyner was bidden to John Eccleston's Thanksgiving. I think he had no less than four invitations to great houses, where there was

brilliant company, and where the feast was served on crystal and Sèvres; but he never hesitated a moment when John, coming in upon him unexpectedly, said simply, "I want you to dine with us to-morrow if you can, Mr. Steyner."

"My dear fellow," he answered, quickly and cordially, "nothing would give me more pleasure."

And sitting at Mrs. Eccleston's right hand the next day, I am very sure that he did not miss the crystal and Sèvres dinner-service. And sitting there, too, he comprehended more of John Eccleston's life than he had ever done before. Of course they talked of art; neither Clarke Steyner nor John Eccleston could be long in any company where there was any sympathy or taste that way without drifting into it; and so, of course, the Violante was discussed. Mr. Steyner was delighted with it, and even satisfied Mrs. Alice with his praises. He had not meant to proffer his request quite yet, but he was led into it involuntarily by his talk.

"I have been thinking," he said slowly and thoughtfully, looking all the time at the Violante, "if you would make me another copy of that fancy head, when you are in Dresden. I know that no copy but yours will satisfy me now."

Alice's eyes literally glowed with the intensity of her delight; but her husband — "that dear, modest old John," as she called him — murmured out something about Mr. Steyner's overrating his ability; and then Mr. Steyner loosed his tongue utterly, and told him of Valsi's praise.

Again Clarke Steyner saw that great red flush mount

to John Eccleston's brow; and for a moment, as once before, John could find no words to speak, and when he did it was in his gay and pleasant fashion; but it touched Steyner more than any gravity. And over their cigars, a little later, it was decided that the copy should be made. And a little later still, when the guest had gone and the husband and wife sat alone together, she said, in a low voice, —

"John, I think this is the happiest birthday and the happiest Thanksgiving of my life."

He put his hand caressingly on her head. "My love, I *know* it is my happiest Thanksgiving." There was a little upward look which dwelt a moment on the Violante, then lifted thoughtfully beyond; far beyond into no earthly space that look went.

It was John Eccleston's Thanksgiving.

AN HEIRESS.

I.

HOPE grew tired of her work, — it was some tedious law-copying, — and flinging the pen down with a little weary sigh she went to the window for amusement or for sight-seeing. Plenty of the last there, for the window overlooked a busy street; and soon Hope's brighter face did not belie her name. Take a long look at her now at this point of her life, for Hope Carroll is to play a very important part in this history; is even now, as she stands there in the small, plain room, a very important person, though she is yet unaware of it.

She is not a beauty; no, but she is attractive in the very teeth of that demurrer, — attractive from the crown of her head, with its wavy hair, to the sole of her shoe, which shows the royal hollow as she stands a-tiptoe, — for she is not tall, — and leans out to catch another glimpse of a passing figure that pleased her eye. No, not a beauty, but delicate and fair and womanly in mould and motion and tone. There is about her, too, a look of soft youth, yet Hope is deep in her twenties. Miss Miles, who lives across the way, would tell you, with that peculiar triumphant smile that some women assume when they are enlightening you on such subjects, that Hope was twenty-six, every day, if she did "*seem* so young."

Hope *was* young, not merely in seeming, but in all interior life. She had about her, or within her, an ever-springing freshness which made for her an immortal youth that would last until her dying day. So, as she stands there now with the weight of, it may be, even twenty-six years, there is this airy quality of young grace in her movements and expression which her life of planning care cannot utterly overcloud. Her day's work is ended; and looking down the gay street she forgets her weary toil in the dreams and fancies the constantly changing faces suggest. Now and then some one of these many faces will look up, and a smile and bow pass for greeting to her. In this observation of hers, twilight steals on, and she turns away with a little sigh from her pleasant pastime, yet half holds still to her dreams as she obeys the tinkling of the tea-bell. Only she and Aunt Mary at the small round table; only she and Aunt Mary in the small tenement. They two make the home there; a very pleasant home, though it has its cares, its anxieties, which proceed from that rough janitor, — Poverty. There is a trifle that goes out with Aunt Mary; that is not half enough to support them, and Hope, in her capacity of copyist, makes up the principal. Hope, if you were her intimate friend, would tell you that she was certainly one of the most favored of women in having such constant occupation, and such kind and constant employers. Her clear and legible chirography would be enough to answer all that, and you might wonder perhaps that with such constant employment, so well paid, that Hope was n't a richer woman. But consider this girl, with her delicate, though not diseased

physique, and do not wonder that she cannot confine herself for eight or ten hours of each day to the close, moveless occupation of a copyist. If she did, you would miss that fresh bloom upon her cheek which deepens as she seats herself at the table under a brilliant globe of gaslight.

"Hope, will you take marmalade to-night?"

Hope sits gazing into the little amber and gold gift-cup that Aunt Mary always places for her, and answers irrelevantly, —

"'And lucid sirups tinct with cinnamon.'"

"What?" half questions, half exclaims, Aunt Mary.

Hope lifts her head and laughs. The dream clears, and she comes back from her fancy wandering to answer more sanely, "No, I will not have any marmalade, Aunt Mary."

"Hope, what *were* you thinking about?"

"Thinking? I was n't thinking, Aunt Mary. I was sitting at a feast served

"'On golden dishes and in baskets bright
Of wreathèd silver; sumptuous they stand.'

And I don't know, — I believe I was the queen of it, and was listening to some sort of a kingly fellow as he talked splendid nonsense to me.

"'King of us all, we cried to thee, cried to thee!'"

sung Hope in conclusion, her quotation fitting only to some dinner fancy of hers.

Aunt Mary laughed, and asked Hope how she could condescend to come down to such simple fare and to

only her society after that fine feast and company. Hope laughed back, and told her that she brought her company with her; and as for the feast, nothing so easy as to turn this amber cup into gold, and the rest of the table furniture changed just as swiftly into "wreathèd silver" and cut-glass. The marmalade melted into

"jellies soother than the creamy curd."

The little white biscuits became French puffs, and all imaginable sweets and wonderful wines glistened and glowed upon this fairy table.

"Just like Duke Humphrey's dinner. Ah, Aunt Mary, did you ever read that story, 'Duke Humphrey's Dinner'? No? You shall read it very soon, then, and I too. It was the most charming and delightful thing, written by Fitz James O'Brien. I read it long, long ago in one of *Harper's Magazines*. Ah, me!"

And Hope, though she smiled, looked a little wistfully at the amber cup. By and by: —

"Aunt Mary, I should like to be rich, and be queen of fête and feast. If I were rich, Aunt Mary, I should be handsome."

There was the least tinge of bitterness in the sarcasm of this remark. Aunt Mary made some demurrer against the sarcasm, not the assertion, which Hope took up.

"O, I don't mean that the gold would gild my face *entirely;* I have more vanity than that; but I mean that, with its prestige and the pretty, fresh things it would buy me, I should be discovered by the now unobservant world to be a beauty. Not that I should be

that, but pretty, fresh things, and artistic taste in the arrangement of them, would make any woman more attractive."

Aunt Mary rallied Hope a little on her ambition and her vanity, but Aunt Mary did not moralize. She had the genius to sympathize with what she had long passed, and her gay raillery at Hope contained no restriction or reproof. Thus these two, so wide asunder in years, were closer than many comrades of the same age. But after the raillery the good lady opened another subject, some project or plan of housekeeping, and the fairy feast was all out of sight, when rat-tat came the postman's knock upon the door.

Hope did not even look up when Aunt Mary took the letter the carrier handed to her; for Hope had no curiosity and little interest in the postman's visits. She had no young-lady love for letter-writing, which was quite natural when you consider that her daily occupation gave her enough of that kind of employment. Aunt Mary, on the contrary, had correspondents in plenty; nieces, nephews, and cousins contributed their several quotas to her fund. The rat-tat of the postman, then, had deep interest for her. But this letter puzzles her. She puts on her spectacles and carries it nearer to the light.

"Why, Hope, it 's for you."

"For me?"

Hope reached over, and taking it into her hands, puzzled, as Aunt Mary had done, over the direction before she opened it. Toronto! She knew no one in Toronto. What could it mean? She broke the seal,

and reading the contents, her surprise did not seem to abate.

"Aunt Mary, who is James Retson?"

Her tone was quite cool, but full of the surprise that was in her face.

"James Retson? Why, Hope, it's your Uncle James, your mother's brother."

"How stupid of me! I had forgotten. We children always called him and heard him called by his step-father's name. I always think of him as Uncle Jim Colman."

"I know; he was so young when your grandmother married again. But what has the letter to do with him, Hope? Has he remembered you after all this time?"

Hope handed the letter to Aunt Mary that she might read it for answer to her question. And Aunt Mary read it. What do you think this letter contained? It contained Hope's fortune. Yes, nothing less; for it was as good as that, — this crabbed, lawyer-like announcement that by the will of James Retson, she, Hope Carroll, was sole heiress of all the lands, estates, and funded property of the said James Retson. And Hope was forthwith summoned to appear before the courts of Toronto to prove and swear herself the said Hope Carroll. Hope was watching Aunt Mary's face, and knew when she had got to the end of the letter.

"Was there ever anything out of a sensation novel equal to this, Aunt Mary? That this uncle, whom I have n't seen and have half forgotten in all these years, whom none of us ever heard of — good, bad, or indif-

ferent — in the time, should suddenly appear to us after death in the form of a will like a prince's! Aunt Mary, do you suppose it is true? I feel odd and elfish, as if I had stepped into a fairy ring and seen the little men in green. Just as I was talking about being rich, too. I wished, and presto! the enchanter comes in the form of the postman. Somebody 's served us a trick, auntie."

"Nonsense, Hope; it 's all fast and sure enough; but very strange, it is true."

Hope knew it was nonsense, but she was steadying her emotions a little by this gayety. They sat and talked, Hope bearing her part very soberly for a while, as they planned their journey and all the little details concerning it; but after a while the tricksy spirit broke out again, this time not to steady her emotions, but as an outlet of exuberance.

"Ah, Aunt Mary, I 'll have the violet silk gown I 've always wanted now, and rings, and brooches, and bracelets in abundance!" Hope had a barbaric taste for ornaments. "We 'll ride in a coach every day; I do hope it won't turn out a pumpkin, as we drive up to the door, auntie. And I 'll have a feast like the one of my fancy, with the baskets of silver and the gold cups; and I 'll be queen of it.

> 'All in a purple gown she stood
> Her hair within a diamond snood.'

I shall be a beauty then, you may be sure, auntie.

> 'For 'twixt the diamond bands her hair
> Shone soft as silk, and still more fair
> The faint, faint rose upon her cheeks.'"

"Hope, go to bed," said Aunt Mary. "Your head is getting light."

"But the best of all is, auntie, you shall sit with folded hands from morning until night."

"Hope, I should be tired to death of it."

"You shall go to routs and balls then, every evening, and 'not come home till morning.'"

Hope's gay voice here failed her. The two looked at each other for a moment, and the tears came into the young and old eyes. Deep within both their hearts swelled the tide of thankfulness for this ease and plenty and freedom from anxiety and care, that had come to them.

II.

In the brilliant rooms of Mrs. Hofman Grey there was a little buzz of expectation, which sometimes amounted to a slight waiting-hush. What was it? All the reigning belles had arrived. Even Mrs. Marsh and her beautiful twins, who always made a sensation. A young man standing by Ellen Marsh broke into his pretty party talk, to say, —

"My cousin, George Dane, says the old house on Ludlow Square is turned into quite a palace of art. George, you know, is a judge."

"Oh!" the little beauty looked thoughtful a moment and forgot her flirtation. "How I wish I knew her well enough to call," she ended animatedly.

"George is quite intimate there," the young man resumed.

"He admires her, does n't he? Thinks her very handsome?" the fair Ellen asked anxiously.

"Yes, he admires her, but I can't believe George thinks her very handsome. She has wonderful style and air, I 'll admit, but her face is cold and irregular; yet I 've known fellows as fastidious as George, and with as critical a knowledge of the lines of beauty, talk vivaciously, after they had known her a while, of her beauty. You know —"

Young Ranger did not finish his sentence; he stopped to watch the entrance, as did his companion, of a lady who was making her way toward her hostess at that moment, — a lady young and with the aspect of beauty. We, who watch her unexcitedly, will not call her beautiful, but we will admire the marvellous grace and art of her dress, which in every point is so suited to the wearer, which so calls out every fine feature, which conceals every bad or indifferent one. It is not a brilliant, showy toilet. At first Mrs. Hofman Grey, who likes people to adorn her rooms with their most splendid array, is inclined to feel disappointed and aggrieved that the special guest to whom she looked for magnificence should present herself without a single diamond, or even a pearl, to do honor to the occasion. George Dane, that wise, far-seeing critic, stands aloof and observes this scene. He sees the expression on Mrs. Grey's face. He knows what it means; and there is an expression on his own face, a half smile of appreciation, which, if you saw it, would tell its own story. George appreciates the taste that consults only becomingness, and enjoys with an artist's eye the lovely

grouping of flowers. Lilies so real that you would bend to catch their odor, and, looking into their dewy hearts, would expect to see the yellow pollen, powder the pearl silk and floating lace. As Mrs. Grey's eye detects this lace her brow clears. Mrs. Grey understands all the mysterious grades of the delicate fabric, and this tender, fairy-meshed stuff counts for diamonds in adornment. So, with her floating lace, her floating lilies, her consciousness of perfection in her costume, which gives her something of that smiling ease which a woman must always feel with this consciousness, Hope Carroll goes down the room to meet and speak, to receive greetings and exchange them, with men and women who ten months since did not know of her existence. She perceives the value of it all, — and there is some value, — and she takes it for everything it is worth, — for opportunity to be present at fine pageants, to have the power to know the many, to find the few, to hear and to see whatever is worth hearing or seeing. So Hope enjoys herself. Her enjoyment is of a vastly amusing kind; sometimes a little bitterness creeps in. But though she realizes the world, she does not think so very badly of it generally.

"It is natural for people to go where there are fine rooms full of fine things: is it unnatural that they should think the occupants or the owners of them finer people than in different surroundings? I don't find fault with this, Aunt Mary; but I wonder whether, if I lost all this wealth, there are half a dozen persons who have become fond enough of me through these surroundings to seek me in the little house we left?" And Hope would give a faint sigh as she concluded.

Hope had been prophetic of herself in declaring that she should be called beautiful in the gay shining of her wealth, and the power of adornment it gave her. Most persons, men especially, did not see what subtile taste brought such effects of color and outline. They looked, and saw, through soft surroundings of lace and silk and harmonious tints, a fair face that looked fairer and fresher for the surroundings; a form that somehow expressed itself by contours and motions in such graceful ways that they exclaimed at once, "What a beautiful woman!" There was one, at least, — George Dane, — who understood, but, understanding, only admired the more. He was one of the many whom fortune and fashion brought to her door; for Hope was herself the fashion. An attractive young woman, with an almost unlimited income, how could this help being the case? But George Dane was not one of Hope's many adorers. He was one of the few interesting people whom she welcomed for their geniality or agreeability. George was not exactly of the former class: he was scarcely genial, with his half-satiric unbeliefs, his philosophic cynicism; but he was certainly agreeable to Hope, with her keen sense of wit and humor, and her insight and experience of life.

Yet now and then as he sat in her parlor, which was one of those rooms in what he had named the "palace of art," as he sat there, talking interestedly and interestingly, Hope's mind would flit to the small plain room in the little plain house on Martyn Street, and she would wonder if George Dane was one of the few who would follow her there. It was a question she was not

anxious to put to the test. This evening, as she went through the rooms with that smiling ease, he certainly did not follow her or pay her any court. Hope liked this. It was a change. By and by he came up with his cousin, Will Ranger.

"I want this boy to know you, Miss Carroll," he said lightly, but with a certain air that said as well, "You will honor him."

The "boy" bent his graceful young person before the famous Miss Carroll, who liked him none the less for his boyish blush and slight embarrassment, and, George Dane turning at the appeal of his hostess, the new acquaintances were left alone together for a few moments. Ranger, fresh from his first parties, and the pretty though uncertain manners of young girls like Ellen Marsh, was taken captive by the soft, subdued graciousness of this maturer woman, whose face was yet tender with its youthful aspect. There are some women and some men who have a way of smiling slowly upon you as you speak and they listen, with an expression that seems to imply that what you say is of the utmost importance to them. This was Hope Carroll's way. Will Ranger, when he gave up his place by her side and received that brilliant, sweet smile, did not wonder any longer "that fellows as fastidious as George Dane, and with as critical a knowledge of the lines of beauty," thought Miss Carroll handsome. Hope knew her power; she had known it long ago when her range was smaller; and she laughed sometimes to see how now it was not only wider range that had been given her, but a newer charm which deepened all her

natural ones. Her laugh turned scornful sometimes as this personality of the heiress pushed itself through everything to her view. Yet with all her insight into human action, her knowledge of the world, it was not in the nature of things for Hope to be unhappy. On the contrary, she enjoyed herself vastly.

"Hope, how you play with life!" one day said an old friend, — an old, old friend, of the little house on Martyn Street.

"Well, I worked with it for a long time: give me my play-days without grudging," answered Hope, merrily, yet meaning earnestly. It was a day after this night of Mrs. Grey's, and George Dane was present with Will Ranger and Selwyn Grant. People whispered that Miss Carroll had a secret liking for this Grant, that some time she might take his name. Watch him as he leans there against the bronze shaft that holds that charming Faun. He is handsome, but that is n't the best of him. There is a certain repose about him which is strength and sweetness. To look long into the gray-blue of his clear eyes would be to believe in every expression that he gave of himself. How different from the satiric play of George Dane's dark, inscrutable face!

Into Selwyn's clear eyes comes a fresh light as Hope answers the carping friend with her frank confession of those working-days.

"Mrs. Lee"— to the "friend" — "does Miss Carroll play with life when she goes down into those crooked alleys by the mills?"

Mrs. Lee looked surprised, questioning. Selwyn

answered it, nodding his head with the words, so in earnest was he, —

"She does. The back windows of my office overlook Mill Street."

Mrs. Lee now looked as if she would like to have asked Hope's pardon; but Hope, with flushing cheeks, was busy over the music-stand, and asking young Ranger to help her,— young Ranger, who flashed adoring glances at her upon this revelation. Hope's eyes turned away as she caught them; she half smiled too, but flushed deeper as Selwyn's eyes met her in the turning. Only George Dane seemed unstirred by this revelation. In fact, George appeared a little bored. He whistled softly an opera air, tapping lightly a tattoo accompaniment upon the arm of his chair, and rose very soon to make his adieux. He stood on the threshold a moment, hat in hand, which he waved with a playful sort of exaggeration as he turned away, saying, "Farewell, sweet saint!" There was a flitting smile upon his thin, darkly fringed lips, and Hope thought a tone of mockery in his voice. This was n't agreeable. George Dane's satiric sense was very amusing when it touched upon impersonal topics; but against herself?

III.

The winter had gone, summer had come, and Hope at the sea-shore dispensed hospitalities in the loveliest of cottages. Of the many, she had chosen her few,

her most intimate. There was a girl friend, a widowed cousin whom she liked, Selwyn Grant, and young Ranger. She had asked George Dane, but George had said to her, —

"Hope, I 'm a cross-grained fellow, I suppose, but I hate to visit; it seems to me to take away some of my right to *be* cross-grained, so I prefer my hotel. When I get away from my office I shall run down to your neighborhood for a week or so: you 'll see enough of me then."

All summer Hope stayed there, nor ever wished to go elsewhere, nor ever wished to change her company. Once, when after a few weeks there were signs of flitting in her guests, Hope implored them to stay. "Why will you force me to change my household?" she said. "Now, when we have all become so nicely fitted to each other, you go and break it up for a doubtful uncertainty." Her cordial philosophy settled the matter. They stayed.

At the latter part of the summer George Dane came down, and dropped in upon them one evening, darker, thinner, more saturnine than ever in his cool white linen garments, offering a marked contrast to Selwyn Grant's frank, fair countenance, and Will Ranger's happy boyish health. But they all welcomed him cordially.

"You ought to have been here before, Dane," Selwyn said to him. "You 've lost all these golden weeks burrowing in the city."

"Yes, I dare say; but I don't suddenly take out a lease of independence when summer comes," answered

George, with a grim smile. "I 've been rather entertained, however, — been ferreting out a knotty case that has hung over two sessions already"; and George's grimness relaxed into the keen, triumphant look of the attorney. Selwyn, who observed, and listened, and admired this keen fellow, offered another contrast to him at this point. Selwyn Grant was a man of leisure; not an idle man. With abundant means, his refined intellect, his warm sympathies, his health of mind and body, all saved him from idleness. But George Dane, as he had said of himself, had taken out no lease of independence. By temper or fortune George was not a man of leisure. Yet he worked at his profession as if he loved it sometimes, — alert, eager, and high-tensioned. It gave him a handsome yield, wherewith he lived handsomely, when, to use Grant's words, "he was not burrowing in the city."

While gossip accorded Selwyn Grant — who pecuniarily had no need to draw a matrimonial prize — to Miss Carroll, why did it pass by George Dane without a word of suspicion, when he sat at her table, and called her intimately "Hope"? Probably because George Dane, now seven-and-thirty, had passed by, in their several seasons, heiress after heiress; had sat at their tables, had been intimate in just that passionless, friendly way of his with one and another, without any of that gallant assiduity, that waiting attendance, which distinguishes a suitor; because he could stand by and see them wooed and won; could even applaud the winning, too, — it had come to be understood that George Dane was no fortune-hunter in that way, that

he was, in fact, too cold and ambitious, of too stern a pride, to seek any object but professional distinction. Thus it comes to pass that he has long talks with Hope, discussions of books or thought, when they are in a manner intimate and confidential; that he can sit there just outside the window those summer nights, abstractedly smoking, while Selwyn Grant within — the handsome, manly fellow — goes on with his wooing. At the end of the chapter, perhaps, you may expect to see George Dane applaud.

It was on a morning after one of these nights that George was met by this announcement — not what he had expected — "George, I have decided to spend the coming winter in Rome."

"Um. Who goes with you?"

"Aunt Mary, of course, and *we* go in company with the Fannings."

"You don't say so?"

George looked more surprise than he usually allowed himself to express. Hope colored a little at the quick words and the look. She must have understood his surprise. He said no more, however, about it, and she confided to him all the winter plans. She seemed in high spirits, full of anticipation, and George rode away after their conference, saying to himself, —

"I dare say Grant is going too."

Hope went, but Selwyn Grant did not join the party that sailed with her; neither did he go to meet it.

The winter passed, spring came, summer again; it was full a year before Hope returned. A year older, yet Hope bore the burden bravely. Her face was fresh

and fair in healthful coloring, her eyes full of sparkle, her figure round, yet lithe.

"Hope, have you found the fountain of youth or the philosopher's stone?" asked George Dane of her the day he called after her return.

Hope lifted her eyebrows with a merry sort of affectation she was fond of assuming sometimes.

"Why?"

He made a grimace.

"As if you did n't know that you bloom fairer than ever after a year's wandering."

She laughed.

"I am like the aloe, you know; I bloom late."

"I know that you have had cares, for you have told me so; but there is n't a print of them on your face. How does it happen?"

She grew serious. "Partly temperament, I suppose, which in its elasticity throws off much, — the print at least; and then you have only known me since life was easier to me, through this fortune that my uncle left me. I was not unhappy then, when I lived in the little house on Martyn Street alone with Aunt Mary. It was a pleasant home, and I enjoyed my reading, my friends, or any amusement, with great zest after my work was over for the day. Hope and Fancy were always building for me very fair and stately edifices of happiness, and my days seemed going on almost pleasurably, sometimes. But my skeleton was only hidden even then. It was one abiding care for the future. I knew that I had no nearer relative than Aunt Mary; her I loved as a mother, for she had been that to me, and I

used to think with vague trouble of what would happen to us if some ill should come to me — if I could not work as I did. Ah, does any *man* know what this shadow of possible want is, that hangs over the heads of so many women, gently nurtured as we were, — women poor and proud, who can look to no one for home comforts and cares? Over my head always hung this shadow. It used to blot out all the sunshine in my castles sometimes. I think if you had known me then you might possibly have seen the shadow once in a while breaking through upon my face," she concluded, in a low tone.

"I am glad I don't see it there now, Hope."

"Yes: do you know I never wake now without that consciousness for a first thought, — that the shadow of that care is gone? Ah, I thank Heaven for it, it is such blessed relief."

Her companion was leaning slightly forward, his arm resting upon his knee, — a usual attitude when deeply interested. As she paused he asked a question, whose pointedness was softened by the simple, friendly tone :—

"Hope, why have n't you married?"

It was abrupt, but it seemed neither too free nor in any way intrusive to Hope, who knew that he was thinking of her peculiarly isolated lot, with no nearer tie than Aunt Mary. She colored a little, however, very faintly, just evincing the blush of her womanliness, but her voice was steady and quiet when she spoke in reply.

"I suppose I have n't had my heart touched deeply enough, or because *I* have not touched anybody's heart

deeply enough. Then I think I am wanting in faith. I have seen too much into human nature, perhaps, and yet — Well, I am not, it seems to me, one of those who have an ideal; but I have not met the man whom it appears to me is enough in unison with me to make it safe for him to marry me. I have one bit of romantic sentiment, perhaps"; and she colored more ardently. "I wish to be loved for *myself*. You will not think this arrogant, you understand — "

He broke in: —

"Yes, I understand. You *have* little faith; it is no wonder: but there was a fine fellow, last year, Hope, whom you could n't doubt. There were fifty men whom you knew, whose consideration for various reasons went beyond yourself, though you attracted, to your fortune. We will allow this to be natural to those fifty; but you found one who offered a broad contrast. He stood out nobly, one against the fifty. There was no earthly reason of any kind why you should doubt him."

The calm, kindly interest that was displayed in this still closer questioning, and the confidence and sympathy that existed between these two, hindered the questioning from the least approach to inquisitiveness. His tone and manner both implied too strongly for any such suspicion, solicitude for her welfare, and a fear that she was making some mistake with her life. He waited, still regarding her earnestly, after he had spoken those last words: —

"There was no earthly reason of any kind why you should doubt him."

Her eyes were cast down as he said them. For a

moment she kept silence, then, still looking down, her color deepening very much, she answered, lowly, —

"I doubted myself."

He knew pretty nearly what she meant, and by and by he said, —

"Hope, perhaps I should not have questioned you thus, but I have seen all along what your fear has been, — that you might be wooed for your fortune." He rose up to go, held out his hand, and for the last words, "Don't let it fetter you, this fear, Hope; you ought to be happy. Good-by."

She stood for some minutes just where he had left her, looking out upon the rich glories of the autumn landscape with an expression of mortification gathering upon her face. These last words had struck her deeply. What, was this vague fear rendering her suspicious? and did he think after all that she had not dealt fairly with herself in regard to Selwyn Grant? She sat down there by the deep window, and, gazing out upon the wide, bright street, held inward communion with herself. She liked the woof of which her life was wrought at the present time; it was all fair and splendid: but in the future had she no dream of closer companionship? Only she and Aunt Mary in the world. Some day Aunt Mary would leave her, and some day her youth would be gone. She started, for here went riding past a brave and loyal gentleman, one whom she had not seen since last year, — Selwyn Grant. He lifted his hat, bowing low, and there was a sudden flush upon his cheek at sight of her. For a moment her pulse beat quicker, and her color came flushing like his. You would have

said at once there were the signs of love ; that, like the Lady of Shalott, she had seen Sir Lancelot, —

"As he rode down to Camelot."

But no, Hope knew better than any one that this was not her Sir Lancelot. And why not? Hope herself asks herself this question. "He pleases my taste, he stirs my imagination ; I admire him ; I know him to be kind and manly and honorable ; and I know *that he liked me for myself ;* why is it, then, that he does not fill my heart?"

IV.

Hope sat at a great feast. She was queen of it, and wore the identical purple of her fancy feast, — that soft, cool lilac-purple that evening light does not destroy. How it had all come true, this dreaming of her youth ! She thought of it, and smiled as she sat for a moment a little apart, catching the sound of the music and the white flying feet of the dancers ; hearing through all the murmurous hum of many guests, whose festive array in the richly decorated rooms under the blaze of the chandeliers made a brilliant pageant. Hope smiled, and rising, stood again in the very midst of the throng, her gracious presence carrying a charm wherever she moved. At last she comes upon a group eagerly discussing some bit of news or gay gossip. She hears as she approaches the voice of Will Ranger : —

"She will know if anybody ; she is his most intimate

friend. I 'll ask her. Miss Carroll" — he had come to meet her, and the group closed in, leaving them outside.

"What is it I am to know if anybody, and to tell you if I know, Mr. Ranger?" and Hope smiled in such a fascinating way upon the young man that he wellnigh forgot his purpose. He stooped to pick up a glove she had dropped, pressing it to his lips in the action, — the foolish, honest boy, — and then remembered to say, while Hope was still smiling, in a sort of indulgent amusement, —

"About George Dane. He is my cousin, but I never know anything of him. It 's about this rumor of his engagement. *Is* he engaged to Miss Wharton of Washington, do you think? Ellen Marsh says she knows it to be so. Ellen was in Washington all last winter."

George Dane, just then entering, and looking round him for his hostess that he might pay the courtesies of the evening to her, suddenly catches her glance across the intervening sea of faces. Will Ranger, who stood beside her, and listened to her commonplace denial of knowledge concerning the matter of the rumor, heard nothing, saw nothing, in her tone or expression as she answered him that struck him as unlike her ordinary demeanor; but what was it, what mute appeal or question did George Dane catch with that glance of her eyes? Once before he remembered to have seen that look in her face. It was on a day when some one hastily brought her tidings she thought then to be true, — that Aunt Mary had been thrown from a carriage. He had never forgotten that look; it flashed over him

now. What had happened? His quick eye perceived Will Ranger talking in his usual style to her, and he knew him to be unconscious. As swiftly as he might he made his way to her. Will Ranger had vanished at his approach, and as he took her hand he looked inquiringly at her.

"What is it, Hope? What has happened?"

Gradually, as he watched her in his onward progress toward her, he had seen the bloom and brightness die out of her face; and as he questioned her now, notwithstanding the flush that came to her cheek, she looked desolate. He drew her arm in his, and said, "Come out into the garden."

The long windows were wide open, and the late September night had the balmy breath of summer.

Hope, her arm in his, followed his guidance with a vague unresistance; and as she went, every moment, through a certain sense of exterior confusion, she was becoming conscious of the state of her heart. She began to see that her life, enriched by such steady friendship, had never missed anything; but at a blow this citadel was vanishing. Her whole life seemed threatened. If George Dane had been other than what he was, other than the constant, unimpassioned, almost ungallant friend, she would have sooner discovered her heart. He led her out into the garden into a sheltered pleasaunce, and then again asked her, —

"What is it, — what has happened, Hope? I saw it in your face the instant I caught your glance."

His cool, only kind friendliness aroused her pride, struck, too, a cold chill upon her. She recoiled in-

wardly; outwardly her manner was calm enough, though she answered hurriedly to his question: —

"Nothing has happened. Will Ranger was asking — telling me something, and — I had just heard some news that startled me."

She had bungled at her answer, that she felt at once; in trying to remedy it she had made it worse. George Dane kept silence for a little space; then, as if he had waited for her to speak further if she had been disposed, and was relieved to find it a matter of small importance, he began telling her something that was then interesting him. In the midst of it Will Ranger came in sight with Ellen Marsh. As they passed in the pleasaunce suddenly George Dane stopped to say, —

"Will, what marvellous story were you amazing Miss Carroll with when I came in?"

It was a mere impulse, unreasoning, half mischievous, that prompted this, for George Dane was too much of a gentleman to wish to intrude into anything seriously kept secret. To him the matter had settled into a trifle. Will Ranger laughed.

"I asked Miss Carroll to tell me something about a bit of news I had heard. We thought she 'd know," he answered.

Ellen Marsh took up this answer with her gay, bantering words, which revealed the whole. George gave a satirical, indefinite reply, and turned abruptly away with his companion. Hope's heart died within her; a glance at his face, — his face which never turned to her now, — and she knew that he had her secret. Without a word he kept on, not toward the house, but in

the path away from it. Where was he going? For her life she could not have spoken; and still holding her arm firmly against himself, he kept on.

On the grounds was a little pavilion where she sometimes passed the hours she desired to be uninterrupted. It was simply furnished, the door easily opened by one who understood its hidden bolt. George Dane had made many a visit to this little hermitage; its hidden bolt was well known to him. Into this retreat, then, he now surprised Hope by turning. He wheeled a chair for her by the moonlight-flooded window, and himself remained standing, leaning, facing her, against the casement.

"Sit," he said abruptly, "and let me speak to you." Still unresisting, she obeyed him. "Hope, I have a confession to make to you."

Hope felt as if the soft south wind was full of taunting, jeering voices.

"In the first days of my acquaintance with you, Hope, I came to the knowledge of one thing, — that you were the one woman that I could love. At the same time that I made this discovery I made another,— that you would never marry a man whom you were not assured would take you just as readily penniless."

He stopped a moment, his face paled and flushed; then, with a resolute lift of his head, he went on, —

"Hope, I loved you. I do not love easily nor lightly. I had lived nearly forty years without finding a woman who could be to me what you were; but for all that, Hope, I would never have taken you penniless, with my own income merely the result of my

professional work, if I had been assured that you returned my love. Had I been the possessor of an independence apart from this, you would have found me a determined wooer. Hope, do you understand?"

He paused a moment, but she could not speak. He went on: "Life is uncertain. I would not, first of all, put a wife or family into the possible position of poverty which my death would be sure to do. Secondly, I am fastidious about the conditions and circumstances of life. If these conditions and circumstances must be inharmonious to my tastes, I prefer to bear them alone. If there are to be struggles and privations, I prefer to struggle by myself, and to endure without a companion in privation. Perhaps this is very worldly; perhaps I should forget everything but love and the possession of the loved one: but it is not my nature to lose myself in romance. I can love ardently, enduringly, but I cannot lose sight of the fact that we live in an age when all refined social conditions are somewhat imperative for the enjoyment of this love. I am not pleading my cause, the cause of a suitor, Hope, when I say all this to you. I say it because I consider it your due. Knowing what I do of your prejudice, — and I do not blame you for it, — I am much too proud to offend you by offering myself as a suitor."

As he ceased he passed his handkerchief across his forehead, as men do when under some emotion or excitement which blurs the eyes and beads the brow. Then he turned toward the door with the words, —

"Shall we return to the house?"

Already he was holding the door open, was waiting for her to pass; and she sat there motionless, thrilling under his words. Thinking — "This man, who plainly tells me that he would never marry me if I were penniless, is the man that I love. He is a different man from him of last year, from Selwyn Grant. He is worldly and ambitious and prudent. The other had some of the heroic elements. He would have dared anything, borne anything, for my love; but he did not fill my heart. I knew all this, I know it now. That other is the very ideal of a lover, but I do not love him. I love this man who stands unasking here before me. He fills my heart."

Something like this it was which flashed through her mind; and as he stood waiting she spoke his name.

"George."

He started at the accents of her voice, they held so much in their low sweetness. Then she put out her hand.

"George, come back. We two are only suited to each other; we cannot lose each other. Will you take me now with this very fortune I have made such a bugbear of?"

He took her, holding her closely in his arms; and when he spoke his voice was full of tender vehemence, —

"Hope, I take you, loving you so well that the possible misconstructions of the world at my choice do not embitter or deter me. You know that I love you, Hope."

She knew it by the very rest and content that filled all her heart as he spoke. Verily, "we love whom we must."

MARGARET FREYER'S HEART.

I.

IT was in the summer of 1860. Margaret Freyer was one of the season belles at Newport. She was then two-and-twenty, — a slender, graceful girl, whom men spoke of as "that charming Miss Freyer"; of whom women wondered "what men could see in Margaret Freyer to admire so much." I have known gentlemen to come from her presence, where they had been lengthening a brief call into a visit, and go into raptures, in the hearing of lady acquaintances, over Margaret's hair, and her eyes, and her teeth; or her color, her form, and her grace.

"Such dark eyes! Such brilliant hair! Such dazzling teeth!"

And the fair hearers would look in amaze. "Why, her eyes were green. And she was so sallow; and the outlines of her face so irregular! And as for her color, why, that was quite as irregular. When Margaret was n't under some excitement she was pale as a ghost, and showed great hollows in her cheeks. Handsome!" *They* could n't see Margaret Freyer's beauty.

Yet Margaret Freyer possessed the power of great beauty. For she was one of those persons who had all the effects of beauty without its perfect possession. So men and women differed about her. To the former,

after leaving her electric presence, where they had watched that vivid coming of color, the kindling eyes, the quick flashing smiles, the flitting expressions, Margaret was beautiful. To the latter — women whom Margaret mostly saw, gay girls, who chatted and gossipped over last night's party — Margaret Freyer was only "a plain, sallow girl, rather stylish, but so peculiar!"

And what was the reason that this "sallow girl" transformed herself so brilliantly for these men instead of these women? Was it the common incentive of coquetry that roused her to animation? No. But in the position of life in which it was Margaret's fortune to be cast, as a general rule, the sons took wider ranges of thought and speculation than the daughters. And naturally enough, as being men, they came in contact with all the contrasts of life, touched at all its points in their intercourse with their fellows; while their sisters, revolving in their narrower circle, which custom has rendered exclusive to one class or "set," have little knowledge and less interest for any other.

And Margaret, an only daughter, associated with her father and two brothers from her early girlhood, partook of their spirit most cordially, — a spirit which by nature and education embraced broad grounds. So it happened that she became more companionable to "these men" than to "these women."

So it happened that she stood talking, on one of those summer nights, with Matt Dillon and Harry Smythe and Mr. Garruth, three of the finest fellows you could have found at Newport that season or any other season.

And across the room, leaning on their partners' arms,

and waiting for the next waltz to strike up, were some of those fair dissenters, who wondered "what Matt Dillon and Harry Smythe and Mr. Garruth could see to admire in Margaret Freyer."

One of these partners — a tall, slight, and dark man, with a promise of greater breadth in the well-knit frame for the days that were to come — was evidently not so surprised at the admiration as the pretty blonde who hung upon his arm; for as he listened to Bertha's light, graceful talk with courteous response of smile, or word, or bow, he shot out from under black brows a curious, inquiring look at Margaret opposite.

But Madison Wythe was too much of a tactician to betray his interest to his lady companion. Much too wise and witty to say, as he felt, "Who is that brilliant girl across there with Dillon and the rest?"

No, he waited; went through the long waltz with that tireless Bertha Downes, swung off near the supper-room as the last flute sounded, met Dillon coming out, and made him go back again while he transferred Miss Downes to one of the Smythes. Then at liberty, he linked his arm in Matt Dillon's, and sauntering down the floor, asked, —

"Who was that girl you stood talking with, Matt?"

"Which girl?"

Matt had been talking with a dozen certainly, and this rather widely put question was n't easily answered.

"Which!" There was sarcastic emphasis in this repetition. "It 's my opinion there is but one girl here with whom we can *talk* for the space of fifteen minutes, Matt."

"Oh, I know now"; and Matt laughed, and then looked at his companion oddly.

"Well, who is she?" Wythe was getting impatient.

"A slender, sallow girl, with heavy eyes and an abstracted manner— "

"Pish! No, no. A girl with clear skin, a vivid color, and splendid dark eyes, that talked with her tongue. And she wore some sort of scarlet vine running like fire through her hair."

Matt laughed again.

"Yes, I know, I know, Wythe; but what *I* said is what the women say about her. It 's Margaret Freyer."

"I want to know her."

"Yes, I see you do," returned Dillon significantly. "But I warn you, Madison, that you won't agree with each other. You 'll quarrel. She 's radical; comes of a radical family; full of isms, and that special ism which you hate specially — "

"Come, Matt, you are wasting time. Will you introduce me?" Wythe interrupted, laughing himself now.

"Then I warn you again," proceeded imperturbable Matt. And here a tragic look. "There are two obstacles. Smythe and Garruth are in the way."

"In the way of what, — an introduction?"

"Oh, only an introduction!" with a quizzical look. "I thought — O Miss Margaret, did you get your fan? (There she is now, the other side of the table, Wythe," in an under-tone.) Then again, louder: —

"You promised to drink that Marcobrunner with me, and hear my Spanish pledge over it. It 's a secret I

can only give to you. I 'll come round, or over, which is it? There seems an even chance."

And for a second the sparkling fellow looked about, as if in debate with himself.

Then a gentle jostle here, a setting aside in some remarkable manner of square shoulders, and a parting of seas of silk and muslin, — smiles, bows, and "I beg your pardons," all with that inimitable good-humor and charming grace, — and Matt Dillon had found his way through the throng, and was bending over the Marcobrunner, speaking low and rapidly to listening Margaret Freyer. Madison Wythe, across the table, knew what the ruse of the Spanish pledge meant.

He knew, as he lent an ear to a gay little talker beside him, that he was under discussion between the owner of those splendid dark eyes and Matt Dillon. He knew Matt was proposing his acquaintance, and he felt the splendid eyes in a glance of curiosity, it seemed to him like measurement; and he colored so fiercely that the little talker thought she had bewitched him.

Presently the throng thinned, and Matt Dillon returned, took him by the arm, with these words: —

"Smythe and Garruth will want to kill you, and then perhaps you 'll want to kill them. If it comes to that, you know, you can wait till you catch them in the Carolinas, and settle it in a compound duel. I 'll come on and play the second."

"Which side?"

But by this time they stopped in front of Miss Freyer, and Dillon stopped his nonsense to say, "This is my

friend Mr. Wythe, Miss Freyer. Miss Freyer, Mr. Wythe."

Margaret Freyer looked up and caught that glance again, — a glance that, half an hour ago, had struck athwart Bertha Downe's blonde hair, as that dark face went flashing above it down the measures of a waltz.

"I wonder who he is!" she had thought then. She knew now; that is, she knew his name was Wythe, — Madison Wythe, Matt Dillon had said. But that was n't much to know. It was something, but not everything. And Margaret liked to know a great deal about people when she cared to know at all. She liked to study character, and she was really a very clever student. Here was a face that promised plenty of study, — a dark, deep face, that wore its dusky beauty like a mask, and kept cool control somewhere beneath of the fire that leaped to the eyes in those flashing glances.

He did n't say much, as they stood there in the supper-room; but as they moved away, he followed directly; and when again in the hall he managed to draw her apart from the others, in some perfectly unnoticeable manner, — a certain silent power, which was not stratagem.

Then a French horn began piping Strauss's sweet Zamora; and as the clear whistle of a flute closed in he bent his head to her. It was curious. The mere motion was of deferential entreaty, which made the words that followed a surprise: —

"I want you to waltz with me."

There was not only a simplicity about this, but there was a dreamy, confidential tone in it.

The music seemed to suggest some fine conditions of thought and feeling, which he felt that she could share. That was the expression of his manner, his tone. And Margaret accepted the invitation it involved as she put her hand in his. Down through the cool spaces of the hall, just without the circling dancers, he held their way.

Sure, silent, and with profound repose of action he bore her on. And ever through the tender deference of his air there was that confidential tone which drew her into his thought.

Softer and clearer blew out the clear notes of the horns, finer the fine, shrill whistle of the flute, sweeter the strains of the violins, and nearer, sweeter yet, the harp's low, golden twang.

But what strange story were they pouring forth? What "thoughts that breathe and words that burn" did horns and flutes and harps express as she floated on? Was this the effect of Strauss's Zamora? She had kept its sweet measure a hundred times with a laugh and a jest; but now she kept its rhythmic beats with a pulsation that thrilled responsive to the new story the horns and harps and flutes were telling.

So floating on, she lost the time, the place; and thus rapt away, what is it she hears, what is it she says in two or three questioning words of dreamy tone?

"Miss Freyer!"

And the dream was broken, the spell was dissolved.

They were just gliding past a window. There was a door beyond. Her companion dropped into a walk, and putting her hand over his arm, led her out under the night and the stars.

"Miss Freyer, I have tired you."

He did not wait for her to answer, but leaning over the balustrade with a deep respiration, as if in the scent of the sea, and its hoarse murmur, he recalled something foregone, he said, —

"I have not heard that waltz since I heard it played at Wythe Willows. It was just such a night as this, and my cousin, Raymond Wythe, — you may have met him last summer here, — a splendid young fellow; he was lost at sea, yachting, after he left the North, — it was just such a night as this that he played the Zamora, and for the last time at Wythe Willows. When the band struck up its familiar notes a few moments ago I thought of that time. I remember I was sitting in a far window while he played, and could only see the outline of his head and his beautiful face, which came out into the moonlight; all the rest was in shadow. And as I listened and looked he seemed to me the personation of some beautiful, strong, womanly soul, — all the sweetness of a woman, you know, and enough of the strength of manhood, not masculinity, you see. Raymond had always suggested something like this to me, but never so completely as at that moment. His youth aided the feeling, — not then nineteen, and lovely as any girl. But you are fatigued. I tired you; I kept you there too long. Sit here, and let me get your shawl."

Before she could assent or dissent he had disappeared; and returning, brought, fluttering across his arm, a shawl of white wools, fringed with a curious mingling of pale green chenilles and strings of pearly beads, which glistened and shone and clashed together with

every movement in a little soft tinkle such as you might fancy for fairy bells. She looked in surprise.

"How did you know my shawl?"

"How? Well, I can hardly tell. I certainly had never seen you wear it; but there were twenty shawls lying in a chair, — blue, red, and black; all the colors of the rainbow, and every style of stripes and checks. I shook them over, and came to this scrap of a mermaid's drapery. The moment I heard the tinkle of the fringe I knew where it belonged, — I knew the sound of the sea. On what nautilus shell for a boat did you sail for this, Miss Freyer?"

He looked down at her as he spoke, his mouth smiling and his eyes alight with sportiveness. She laughed, caught his spirit, and answered, quoting, —

> "'On the broad sea-wolds i' the crimson shells
> Whose silver spikes are nearest the sea.'"

He was leaning against the balustrade opposite her, and laughed gayly back again as she quoted.

"Yes, it is veritable sea-foam," he said, — "all that white and green and pearl. And how it suits you! Just as if I should not have known its owner. There is n't another inside there who could wear it. I know people's belongings when I see them." Just then she raised her hand. A diamond flashed upon one of her fingers, and he went on with his fanciful mer-talk.

"Ah! I see a merman has left his kiss upon your finger. Is it a pledge or a bond? and why did n't he give you for keepsakes 'turquoise, and agate, and al-

mondine'? Those are more of your rightful belongings."

The band was playing again other waltzes, and they both stopped to listen. Gay tunes these were, dashing along in mirthful measure, swift and jubilant, for they were the last. The dances were nearly done.

Margaret was beating her fan upon her wrist to these swift gayeties, and thinking of that sweet Zamora, and the strange spell it had brought, when her companion broke the silence. He had only been waiting.

"Miss Freyer," — and his voice was soft and deep, as the softest and deepest strains of the music, — "will you tell me of what you were thinking when the band played the Zamora just now as we danced?"

A flush rose to her cheek.

"Did I speak as we waltzed?" she asked.

He came forward and sat down upon the second step of the flight, and leaned his elbow on the floor at her feet. Looking up he answered, "You asked once, 'What is it you were saying?'"

Margaret returned his gaze. It was a fine face upturned to her, and Margaret trusted her skill in reading character, and felt that the character here was one to have faith in. There was depth of nature and philosophy in it, and something else, — a sympathetic sense, that won her on to speak honestly, if not fully.

"I think I must have followed your thought in a measure," she said, not without some fluctuation of feeling, which flushed her cheek there in the moonlight so vividly that he could not but see it.

"Or perhaps your thought followed me"; and she

smiled faintly. "I think the intensity of your remembrances must have reacted upon me and impressed my mood. I am not specially impressionable, but sometimes my sense of sympathy is touched and I seem to know, or fancy I know, a person's thoughts, perhaps"— laughing a little nervously. "So it was, I suppose, that I received a certain tone from you, and my own mind shaped it to my own needs; or perhaps that is not the word I should use."

He flashed a quick glance at her as she hesitatingly uttered this, then bent his head again.

"And you thought I had spoken?" he said musingly. "What?"

"No, no. I can't recall. I—" She stopped.

Again he lifted his eyes involuntarily. There was such emotion of color and expression upon that expressive face that in an instant he understood. It was a revelation to him.

Immediately he spoke. "I will tell you frankly," were his words, "that as we stood there, and the music began with that familiar Zamora, and brought up with it the old association, the old dreams and fancies, I felt — how can I express it? — that your nature was so friendly and kind and genial that you would understand any peculiarity of mood, and become, consciously or unconsciously, a sharer of that mood, and so heighten instead of lessen its vague yet intense charm. But why strive to explain the inexplicable? Why strive to reduce to words what can only be felt? I hope all this will not bring any regret to you. I hope you will not feel that I have been intrusive. I see what you think, — that I

am specially magnetic. I am not. I must tell you fairly that I do not understand its laws, that I have never tried to. I am only conscious of indirect magnetism, such as any sensitive person possesses, such as tempers, likes and dislikes, repulsions, etc. I have never met with the person before that I have impressed as I have yourself."

They all at once became conscious here that the horns and harps and flutes had ceased, and the dancers were leaving the hall. He rose instantly, and with quick transition of tact turned any possible feeling of embarrassment by gay recurrence to her mermaid claims, as the shining sea-foam fringe clashed its soft music.

As he bade her "good-night," or I think it may have been "good-morning," at the carriage-door, he leaned in a moment to ask, —

"May I come round and see you to-morrow?"

She gave assent, smiled, bowed; the sea-foam fringe sounded in his ear, and she was gone.

What were Margaret Freyer's thoughts that night as she unbraided her hair, sitting there in her room, as she laid her head upon her pillow, and gazed through the open window upon the fading stars? Whose words did she remember most vividly? Whose face shone out beyond the others? Was it Harry Smythe's, earnest, refined, and manly? Was it Garruth's, elegant, eloquent Garruth's? Was it Dillon's — Matt Dillon, the most sparkling and graceful of her friends?

Not one of these. Margaret's remembrances of that evening dated from the time when the band began

playing Strauss's Zamora ; when she found herself drifting down the hall, upheld by a touch, light yet firm ; when she found herself dreaming a dream whose vividness mocked reality, — in which she seemed to hear tones new, yet familiar as life ; in which she seemed to hear even the shaping of sentences, — faint utterances, — and then she half murmurs, "What is it you were saying?" And the dream passes.

This is what Margaret thinks of as she unbraids her hair, as she lies down upon her pillow. And falling asleep, she dreams it over again. And all through these sleeping fancies still winds and steals Strauss's sweet Zamora.

II.

"Where did you disappear last night? I saw you waltzing with Wythe after we left the supper-room, and that was the last of you for my vision. Bertie Downes, with feminine sagacity, declared you had gone home, on the strength of a white and green shawl being missing."

Margaret did n't care to contradict Bertie Downes's sagacious declaration, so she kept silent.

Dillon was too gentlemanly to ask the question again, so went on, covering the pause with his sparkling talk. And Margaret, while she listened, held a little thread of thought apart from what she gave to him.

Here it was nearly the end of the day, and he had n't come. It was rather odd, after his request. Smythe,

Garruth, and Dillon. Dillon not yet departed. The day had been sprinkled thickly with calls. All but the one she looked for with the newer, therefore the greater interest. It was rather odd.

Margaret Freyer, what are you doing? You have a hundred friends, a hundred interests running far back of this new one. Why should you think so much of this? Why should you trouble yourself to feel annoyed? Ah, Margaret, you are proud, and so you think yourself secure. But do you know what you are doing, Margaret?

Margaret is too proud even to ask this question. And so she sits and swings the fringe of her shawl, and listens to the sea-foam sound, and the bright talk of Dillon, and lets that small thread of doubt and wonder and annoyance clash all the fairy bells out of tune.

And then, just as Dillon was saying, —

"Where 's Wythe? I have n't seen Wythe to-day. Strange fellow Wythe is. There 's something so spontaneous, yet reserved, about him. The best fellow in the world, but — you know the story — the hand of steel in the velvet glove."

Just then a clear tone, whistling softly, as if in abstraction, a waltz tune, — the Zamora. Then a step turned upon the gravel-path. Then a figure came in view, and Dillon exclaimed,—

"There he is now!"

A moment, and he stepped in over the low sill of the window, — Madison Wythe.

And, "How do you do, Mr. Wythe?" very quietly, a trifle coolly. And, —

"How do you do, Miss Freyer?" very warmly; and Matt Dillon, who always had his eyes open, looked up and caught a blush just stealing off of Miss Freyer's cheeks.

I don't know by what train of reasoning Mr. Dillon, from this, came to the conclusion that Bertie Downes was mistaken in her assertion last night; but it was very certain that he did come to the conclusion, and said to himself, —

"She was flirting somewhere with Wythe on one of those confounded piazzas all the time I was looking for her. Hang Wythe, how he steals the march!"

If Margaret Freyer had heard the name he gave to her *tête-à-tête* she would have been scornfully indignant, for Margaret never consciously flirted, whatever the world might call her occupations. The next thing, Dillon asked, by way of talk, —

"Where 've you been all day, Wythe?"

"In my room ill, — one of my rare headaches; it goes with the sun. So I am out for the first time to-day. I could have spared yesterday better."

Twice had this last guest made Margaret's pulse beat quicker in this brief sentence, — once in sudden relief at the reason of his absence; again, "I could have spared yesterday better."

O Margaret, did you confess to yourself what strange pleasure that simple sentence gave? No; you only thought, Margaret, "I like that, it is so earnestly said."

Yes; there was that subtile charm about Madison Wythe. He never said a thing of this kind but that he

was in earnest; and the careless admission of his earnestness in tone and manner — that one-thoughted, dreamy manner — was not its least charm.

Matt Dillon saw it all, — the blush, the smile, perhaps the heart-beats; and he drew his conclusions again, — wise conclusions.

Ay, Matt, go home. The sun has gone down, and night has come on, and there are no stars in the heavy sky. Go home; you will not be missed, though you have missed so much. Go home, old friend, and leave the new. It is bitter; but the world is full of such bitterness, and it is sure to touch warm, generous natures like yours. So Matt goes home, whistling softly, as he goes through the green fields, and along the lovely lanes, snatches of that same Zamora. A little while since, from other lips, it sounded like a song of happy triumph. Now it is like a dirge of hope.

It was not long after that, in his very footsteps, through the green fields and along the lovely lanes, followed those two, — Madison Wythe and Margaret Freyer. They were going down to the sea. There was a storm coming up. Margaret had never witnessed the effect at the beaches, and he had proposed her going now; and, wrapped in her hooded cloak of tweed, Margaret was ready for the wildest expedition.

She had a fit companion for the scene she sought. Madison Wythe possessed all the elements of strength and softness. With what intensified appreciation, then, did she stand there upon the rocks, and listen to the roar of the waves, every moment growing nearer

and deeper, until they broke their silver walls against cliff and shore with the booming as of cannon and the thunder of a hundred drums. It was a wild and splendid sight. Black reaches of land, lying in the background like some couchant monsters of the deep; and before, that trackless waste of water, lashed into foaming fury, its towering waves lit into sublime exaggerations by the constant play of lightning. The very earth seemed to heave under them in this increasing convulsion.

Nearer and nearer dashed the waves, louder and louder their derisive scorn; and the wind and rain and thunder joined the tempestuous cry.

Nearer and nearer the waves, until a fierce dash, and they who had stood a moment since untouched were almost overwhelmed. Their rock of refuge was a rock of refuge no longer. But a strong arm upheld Margaret, and not a fear or a misgiving entered her heart as it bore her backward, though the waves followed closely, shouting for their prey. For how could fears live in such a presence as his who held her there?

He had the very qualities to be brought out most buoyantly on an occasion like this. Thoughtful, speculative, and given to imaginings, with all his social genius and natural earnestness, he would quite likely fall unconsciously into silent dreams amidst the gay pageantry of a ball-room. But amidst the excitements of the outward life, the roar of the elements, or any suggestion of peril or adventure, his spirits rose exhilarant. So now, as he bore her backward from danger in all that wild commotion of nature, he grew gay and

jubilant. A certain airy, fantastic grace played about his words as he jested and laughed at every fresh assault of wind or wave. To Margaret this fearless gayety, this laughing security, where everything else seemed so insecure, was fascinating to the last degree. She too became gay and jubilant, she too laughed and jested at wind or wave.

And at length, far out of the reach of the hurrying, hungry tide, they rested in their homeward flight for a few moments, and looked back upon what they had left. The storm was breaking; the rain had ceased to fall, and the moon was drifting up through the clouds.

Its faint light showed the flooded shore, all landmarks of familiar rock and stone obliterated, — one wide, vast expanse of sea, lifting fearful heights of angry tide; and evermore that ceaseless song, which the sea wails solemnly by night or day, in storm or shine, piercing through the raving of the wind.

As Margaret listened to this solemn chant, and looked where she had lately trod, her gayety fled, and with a little shiver she sang out suddenly that tragic verse which seems to be the very expression of the sea: —

> "The creeping tide came up along the sand,
> And o'er and o'er the sand,
> And round and round the sand,
> As far as eye could see;
> The blinding mist came down and hid the land,
> And never home came she."

And as she ended the salt sea-spray, as if in solemn mockery, dashed "blinding mist" athwart her face.

She turned with an exclamation that was half a cry. Her floating hair, caught up by the wind, streamed across her companion's hands and brushed his cheek.

Soft, tender touch, clinging and caressive, breathing the faint violet odor which he remembered as one of the mystic thralls of last night; it was enough to kindle a less ardent imagination, to thrill a less sensitive heart than this young Carolinian's.

Did Margaret think of this as she saw that "tress o' golden hair" crushed with vehement pressure against those bearded lips? Did she think that, though any man of gallantry might kiss a "tress o' golden hair" under such circumstances, none other could so have thrilled her own heart as this young stranger, whose acquaintance dated by hours only?

O Margaret, your cheek was pale, your breath came quickly; and a blinding mist, which was not of the sea, hid the land for that moment. Yet, blinder in your pride, you would not read these signs.

It was a wild hour. The drifting lights and darks, the moaning wind, the moaning sea, which evermore sang its restless song. And in her thrilled and pensive mood, Margaret asked no questions of herself.

And half in silence, half in some broken poetic talk to fit the night, they wandered home through the green fields and along the lovely lanes.

How many such nights, how many such hours as these before Margaret would comprehend her heart?

III.

It was the last of September. The "melancholy days," the "saddest of the year," were neither melancholy nor sad in this loveliest isle of the sea. The grass wore its deepest green; the trees, though full of flaming hues, yet held the life of summer; and golden skies smiled down on golden asters and the rich refluence of the dark-eyed dahlias.

Tardy is the coming of the "melancholy days" to this favored spot, the shores of which are bathed by that warm, south current which the Gulf Stream, in its tender partiality, suddenly diverging westward, brings.

It is thus that summer lingers late, and there are those who are wise enough to linger with it, and enjoy its last loveliness.

So, on this summer, Margaret Freyer and her friends lingered.

The last of September, and there are no signs of flight in that group who sit round a morning fire of sea-coal, — girls knitting, netting, and crocheting; young men leaning in at open windows, chatting, or scanning newspapers and letters, as the "boy" brings them in.

And Margaret — where is Margaret Freyer? These are all her friends. There are Bertie Downes and Helena Bell, and the three Gale sisters. And there are another three,— Harry Smith and Mr. Garruth and Matt Dillon.

By and by somebody asks the very question: —

"Where is Margaret? I thought she was coming

round this morning. She promised to show me a new stitch."

Bertie Downes gave a little giggle, which made Matt Dillon grate his teeth. He always grated his teeth when Bertie Downes gave one of her giggles. He said he always knew something disagreeable was coming after one of these performances.

But Bertie only said now, —

"I guess you 'll wait for your stitch, Helena. I saw Madison Wythe going in at the gate as I came by."

Was there anything disagreeable in this? Matt seemed to think there was, by the way his brows drew down into a dark wrinkle over his great, honest blue eyes.

Helena Bell dropped her crocheting into her lap, and said earnestly, —

"I wonder if Margaret *will* marry him."

"Of course she will," answered Bertie decidedly. "I never heard of a girl's declaring she *would n't* marry a man with such and such qualities or circumstances or peculiarities but what she was sure *to* marry him"; and Miss Downes settled herself complacently, as if she had had all the experience in the world.

A strange gleam passed over Matt Dillon's face; and, —

"What do you mean by that, Miss Bertie?" he demanded, in rather a sudden and imperious manner.

"Helena can tell you best. Helena remembers the conversation."

He turned to Miss Bell.

"Why, it was one day last month, just before Madi-

son Wythe came. We were talking about Carry More's Southern marriage; and Sarah Kingsley, who had spent a winter with her, was telling how comfortably Carry took the 'peculiar institution,' — Carry, who had such prejudices and principles against it only a year before; and Margaret, who was listening, declared she thought it was shamefully weak, if not wicked, in Carry to take it so. Sarah was a little provoked at this, and asked Margaret if she wanted Carry to make discord between herself and husband for the sake of opinions. You should have seen Margaret's look at this! and she said, in that low, intense voice of hers, 'We were talking of *principles*, Sarah, not merely opinions. And I say that it is either weak or wicked, if not both, for any one to voluntarily place one's self in such positions, where they must live a constant lie, and deny themselves the protest against what they know to be evil.' Then Bertie said pretty much what she said just now; told Margaret that she had never been tried; that if she should fall in love with a Southerner, as Carry More did, she would quite probably follow the rest of the programme. 'Never, Bertie! never!' she answered, with the most vehement earnestness. 'Well, we shall see,' Sarah Kingsley retorted, in her sceptical tones."

"Yes, we *shall* see!" Bertie Downes now interrupted triumphantly, as Helena paused.

What made Matt Dillon so insensible to Bertie Downes's sharp triumph just then? What made that sudden color flush up along his cheek? What made the dark wrinkle over his brows melt away, and leave that misty, far-off look in his eyes? He was thinking.

And while he thought, yes, and while they had been talking, Margaret was passing through the sorest trial of her life. She was proving the very question of which they talked.

"But you love me, Margaret, — you love me!"

These were the fateful words that Madison Wythe flung down at her feet as the one weapon of truth which beat through all her resisting armor.

"Yes, I love you! I love you!" And as she spoke she wrung her hands together in woful passion.

"You love me, and yet you sacrifice that love for an abstract theory, — or, well, a belief then. But upon what is your belief founded? A mere matter of circumstance, of education."

"And I thank God that I was educated in a portion of the country where that point of belief is not obscured by self-interest. It is God's belief, Madison!" and her voice rose out of its tears as she uttered this.

He leaned forward, soft fire in his eyes and fond persuasion in his tones: "But, Margaret, love is beyond everything. What strange, sweet proofs have we had from the beginning that to us had come that rare revelation of fitness which proved us the two halves of one soul! O Margaret, my Margaret, do not turn away from this! Is love not sacred? Is love, such love as ours, not the first consideration, the greatest possible gift?"

So he shook her soul with his impassioned pleading, and tears came as she listened; but in a moment she returned, —

"And you, Madison! If it is above everything,

if it is the first consideration, why not give everything to it? Why not give up that inheritance which is the barrier between us? Would you give up your slaves, Madison, for love?"

His dark cheek flushed.

"Margaret, if I gave up my inheritance I could not give up my conviction. I could not yield *my* belief to yours —"

"Nor could I," she interrupted.

"And I do not ask you to," he went on eagerly. "Keep your faith, keep your beliefs. They shall be sacred to you. You shall live under my roof, you shall lie in my bosom, Margaret, as free and untrammelled in thought and action as you are at this hour."

Margaret was weeping silently behind her clasped hands. He moved nearer, and touched her head with a motion that was like a blessing.

"Oh, Margaret, come!" he entreated. "My lot is cast by all the laws of Nature in the land of my ancestors. Come and share that lot, Margaret. Every instinct of your heart tells you that your place is here." And he suddenly but gently gathered her to his breast.

How much easier to resist would have been impatience, anger, or reproach, — anything but this unvarying sweetness, this loving persistence! And here lurked Madison Wythe's power; here, the hand of steel in the velvet glove. His spirit was strong; and where heart or intellect aroused themselves to conquer or win, all lesser passions were subdued by the greater. With Margaret, therefore, though she resisted him on that one ground, where resistance would have seemed

most irritating, yet the mere point of resistance kindled not the least spark of anger. And so, doubly powerful in his calmness, united to his undoubted love, and his deep, underlying will, did he set himself to break down this resistance.

So intrenched was this man in his own pride of belief that opposition or denunciation, even from strangers, rarely moved him to anger. He seemed to regard this opposition or denunciation as one from his superior heights of knowledge and wisdom might look down upon the ignorant offences and follies of a child.

This was the man with whom Margaret was brought into such woful resistance. Would she yield to him? He never doubted, as he gathered her into his arms there, that she would.

But a moment, and then she lifted her head, her face pale but resolute; her voice once more clear, though faltering with her struggle; her eyes meeting his eyes, dark, mournful, and pathetic.

"It cannot be," she began slowly. "No, do not interrupt me," lifting her hand beseechingly. "I know all that you would say; but it cannot move me from my decision: it can only wring my heart, and you are surely too generous to inflict needless suffering. Hear me once for all, Madison; let me speak fully. You think that my reason of resistance is a theory, a sentiment, which your influence may overcome: but it is belief, religion; it rules my whole character, and holds place in my heart. How, then, can I put myself in a position where my daily life must be either an unspoken

lie or open discord? You tell me, 'Keep your faiths, keep your beliefs: they shall be sacred to you.' But I could not keep them silently. Ah, if in the vain hope that my constant thought might influence yours, I should be tempted to become your wife, how dare I break the covenant of my own soul, and for another generation, perhaps, perpetuate a race of those who may hold another race in bondage?"

Firmly rang her voice now as she concluded, and her face wore the look of one who has passed "near to danger."

In the pause that followed he did not attempt answer. Her noble earnestness had touched him with a momentary despair of his power. But when again she spoke his heart leaped. He little imagined that that sudden softness was the last expression of her love and the final seal of her renunciation.

"Ah, if I had but known it would have come to this I would have guarded my heart and yours; but I was proud or blind. I had never loved before, and I did not recognize love's signs. I had had so many friends, and I thought you only another. If I had but known — if I had but known! But no, it was Fate, it was Fate, — or God's providence. Heaven forgive me! perhaps I needed this sore trial," she broke in upon herself with sudden passion. And then all the impassioned tenderness of her heart overflowed in glance and word and tone, as she said, —

"And you, Madison, — ah, I have made you suffer! But I loved you, I loved you: remember this. And remember always, in the days that are to come, when

we shall be no more together, that there must be God's truth in a principle that could give me strength to sacrifice what I have done to it. Think of this for my sake; and think I loved you, Madison, I loved you all the time." And then, as one in a dream, he felt her breath passing down his cheek, and the soft, swift pressure of her lips upon his own.

Touched, thrilled beyond words, at this seal of her confession, he held her for a moment to his heart. And as she clung there, silent, breathless, what dim presentiment of her meaning struck darkly athwart his soul! What vague uncertainty of his own success! What

"'Never, never,' whispered by the phantom years,"

rung its warning knell there!

But the next moment all this passed away in the clear certainty of the present. She loved him. His presence was dear to her. From this sprang the vision of success; and again the belief in his own power rose triumphant. Yes, he would win her; not by relinquishment of his ground, but by constant, unwavering persistence in a devotion that was unexacting and generous. His presence was dear; it should become necessary. He would subtly, but surely, in some imperceptible ways, overcome her thought by his own. This was his vision of success; this his plan of conquest.

Thus he left her after this interview, confident of many interviews that would follow, where his suit should never be pressed, but where the patient per-

sistence of his love should finally prevail. And as he went out of her presence, her kiss yet thrilling his lips, that day, his soul was jubilant over his vision of victory. "I will see her again to-morrow," he said to himself.

To-morrow! Ah, proud and passionate heart, gather up all your sweetest memories, all your strength of love and endurance, for the to-morrow that is to come will find your will thwarted, your power defied, and your pride laid low! For while, a few hours after, you pace the beach in the trembling starlight, and fancy that to-morrow will find you in HER presence, upon the deck of a steamer, watching the same stars, and perhaps fathoming your thoughts at this very hour, Margaret is speeding away from you. Ay, go to that cottage-door on to-morrow's night. Those left behind can give you little clew to her destination. And if they could, of what avail? You are much too proud to follow where she has voluntarily fled from you. Ay, fled from you. In all your far-reaching thought, you had not thought of this alternative.

> "O sweet, pale Margaret,
> O rare, pale Margaret,
> What lit your eyes with tearful power,"

that through all this fair temptation you did see so clearly? What inward ken revealed to you the danger that beset your path in that fine and fascinating presence?

"O rare, pale Margaret," very wisely you interpreted that daring spirit, very surely you read the meaning of the "velvet glove," — that deep, under-

lying will, that would yield nothing of its own decisions, yet with soft and subtle power seek to overcome whatever resisted it. Very wisely you saw that your only hope of peace was out of the sight of those eyes whose alluring glances must follow you in vain, out of the hearing of tones in whose sweetness lurked a charm that you must ever resist. "O rare, pale Margaret," for conscience' sake have you chosen a heavy cross.

IV.

Mrs. Dillon held high festival in honor of her son's return; only a seven-days' furlough, and Captain Dillon would gladly have evaded the compliment intended him. But Mrs. Dillon was not unlike the rest of her country-people, who, upon the least provocation, run madly to serenades and dinner-parties and all manner of feasting. So it happened upon this night that the old Dillon mansion was resplendent with the blaze of chandeliers and the "gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls." All Matt's old friends were bidden to the feast, and most of them obeyed the bidding. All the old friends, but who is he looking for with that expectant face? And now and then he consults his watch, and again glances toward the door, restless, eager, watchful. Who is it he is looking for?

In this preoccupied mood he suddenly starts: "Ah, it is Bertie Downes! How do you do, Miss Downes?"

"That was three years ago, Captain Dillon. Mrs.

Dupuy, at your service"; and she sends him a curious smile as she drops him a courtesy.

"How can one help forgetting the flight of time, and so fancy himself three years younger when he looks upon Mrs. Dupuy?" And Captain Matt bowed over his gallant speech in the most gracious manner.

"So you fancied yourself three years younger, Captain Dillon? Three years ago? Where were we all then? Oh, I remember. It was at Newport. I have n't been there since, have you? Oh no, I forget you have been in Europe all this time, and come back to become a hero. I congratulate you. It seems to me everybody went away very suddenly that season. Margaret set the fashion first, flashing off without a good-by to anybody. Do you remember that night when Harry Smythe walked in and asked if we had heard the news about Margaret Freyer — how we all thought we were to hear of her engagement to Madison Wythe, and how amazed we were when Harry said she had gone away? And Wythe — did you meet Wythe in Paris, Captain Dillon? He left for Europe just before you did, I believe."

"No, I did n't meet Mr. Wythe in Paris, Mrs. Dupuy. I met him nearer home a month ago, when he came over to our lines under a flag of truce. It was Captain Wythe then. Mrs. Dupuy," — and he lowered his voice a little and looked straight into the lady's bright eyes, — "you must allow that you were mistaken in your estimates of Miss Freyer's character. She *did* maintain her theory, it seems."

"Oh yes, I was mistaken *there;* but I am not always

mistaken, Captain Dillon"; and the bright eyes had a triumphant glitter.

The brave, honest captain met these keen rays very steadily as he answered quietly, "I am glad you are not, Mrs. Dupuy."

Mrs. Dupuy colored, and looked a trifle disconcerted. What did he mean? That he was glad she knew him to be hopelessly in love with Margaret Freyer? It was like his cool audacity.

But there came a clash of music here; it broke the current of talk. There was a movement of silk and the flutter of lace; and the next moment Mrs. Dupuy had another companion, — Helena Bell of the old days, now Mrs. Harry Smythe. They withdrew a little from the crowd; and overlooking it, Mrs. Dupuy watched her host saunter indifferently past the prettiest girls of the season — girls fresh and fair — with that preoccupied, restless manner.

"Did you know that Margaret Freyer is at home, Bertie? Going back next week, her Aunt Anne said."

A new light suddenly dawned upon Mrs. Dupuy's mind.

That preoccupied, restless manner was explained now. It was clear for whom he waited.

"How strange that she should like that horrid wearing life, don't you think so, Bertie?"

"Margaret was always doing odd things, you know, Helena."

"Yes, I know, but to become a hospital nurse. How could she? Then it must tell upon her looks so. And Margaret is n't very young now. She must be twenty-five or six."

Mrs. Dupuy made no reply; she was too much absorbed, for just then she saw that restless, expectant face change with the flash of a sudden, swift smile, and then the handsome military figure was bending in greeting toward a lady entering, — Margaret Freyer. If Mrs. Dupuy had expected to see Margaret looking worn and old, perforce of her hospital service and her twenty-five years, she was mistaken.

To women of Mrs. Dupuy's temper and tone, these twenty-five years of maidenhood were suggestive of waning beauty, and exhausted wit and womanly fascination; instead of which, to natures like Margaret Freyer's, at once deep and ardent, earnest and elastic, it was the prime of beauty, of wit, and of fascination. Mrs. Dupuy wondered at her secretly as she looked upon her there. She saw the slight but rounded figure of other days; the face full of eloquent meaning, with not an added line, a sharper curve. There was about her, too, a fair aspect of freshness, from the tint of her complexion to the motions of the supple form, clad in soft folding silk and floating lace. There was a little wonder, too, in the gaze with which Captain Dillon regarded Margaret. He did not wonder at her changeless aspect, because of added years and arduous occupation; but he knew how she had suffered sacrifice and loss in the past. He remembered a night when he had nearly risked his fate by outward confession, a confession that stayed his own by words that dropped from quivering lips like "slow-wrung beads of agony." He had repaid her generosity by the most generous friendship, and buried all warmer hopes beneath that sacred bond.

But now her bright, almost radiant face, her pleased and interested manner! She showed no scars of her wound. Perhaps, perhaps she may

"Overlive it and be happy."

Perhaps, if again he should risk his fate —

"What is that? You are not going back to the hospitals again, Margaret?" and he stopped suddenly, arrested by her words, under the flying flags of the doorway.

"Yes, certainly. Did you think I had offered my services from mere restlessness or curiosity, and had grown tired by experience? I have enlisted for the war, you know"; and she laughed a little, in a certain arch way that was peculiar to her.

But Captain Matt did n't seem to see where the laugh came in; for his own mouth was drawn down into grim disapprobation, and there was that ominous wrinkle between his brows which presaged opposition. So Margaret was prepared for what followed: —

"How absurd! You 'll kill yourself or ruin your health, Margaret."

She laughed again, glancing up into his face.

"Do I look so much the worse for the wear, then, for this year's service? I certainly don't feel on the road to decay."

But Matt was not easily soothed into complaisance. Still he carried an outward gruffness of friendly displeasure to hide the secret pain. And still she laughed and lightly answered him, until he exclaimed, —

"But what is the use, Margaret? There is surely a sufficiency of nurses without you."

Then a strange change came upon her. A look of pain and perplexity clouded over the brightness of her face, and, "Do not say that," she answered quickly. "I should be sorry to think I was not specially needed by some natural fitness for this work. I have been glad to believe that it was so. Do not, I beseech you, by a single word, try to shake this belief; for I have found in it a contentment, a relief, from almost — "

She broke off, agitated, in a still, breathless passion, which revealed her heart.

Her listener was silent. His glowing fancy of the moment before — that bright, half-formed hope — had suddenly become obscured. And this second pang of loss, perhaps, was bitterer than the first; for by its means he had caught a nearer glimpse of the fond and faithful nature, so womanly while so strong, whose wealth of love he could never hope to win.

Silent, with his head dropped into his breast, he moved on through the rooms with her, until a sudden stillness, in place of the murmurous hum and the clang of music, aroused him. Unwittingly he had strayed aside into a vacant apartment, where the lights shone softer, and the atmosphere was full of the breath of flowers. As he lifted his head the shadow of bitterness passed. The brave and generous spirit was again triumphant. He was not a man to evince much emotion, to betray his sensibility; but when he broke the silence there, with the brief, vehemently spoken words, "God bless you, Margaret, in any work, in any life you may choose to lead!"

Margaret, looking up, saw all he meant, knew that

again he suffered and lost, yet was ready again to give her the loyal service of friendship. She did not speak, but her face was eloquent. They understood each other.

Bertha Dupuy, talking gayly with Harry Smythe, saw the two re-enter the rooms. "Margaret Freyer looks remarkably well to-night," she commented to her companion.

"Yes, I was thinking so myself, — remarkably well; but I always admired Margaret."

Bertha glanced from Harry Smythe's face, with its "admiration," to that of Captain Dillon's. Her subtle keenness of insight penetrated much of the truth. As she had said, she was not always mistaken.

"Ah," she thought, as her quick vision contrasted these two men's faces, "we blundered at more than one guess there at Newport that summer, when we put Harry Smythe and Garruth into the lists before Matt Dillon. Harry Smythe has contented himself with Helena Bell's pretty amiability, and Mark Garruth is desperately in love with Harry's sister. But Matt Dillon alone, that unsentimental Matt Dillon, has persisted in his constancy. He has actually had a grand passion for her all this time. And who would believe it if I told them this discovery? Bah, what a blind, stupid world it is! But you may persist, Matt Dillon; your constancy will never win what you want; for, spite of your gay looks, Margaret Freyer, you are fretting over what you have lost."

So shrewd and worldly Bertha penetrated the truth, but stumbled in her final conclusion. Her shrewd

and worldly instincts did not serve her in the summing up.

Fretting! Did Matt Dillon think the glimpse he got of that sacred sorrow could be thus translated?

V.

The cool, sweet wind of the early March morning blew up over wide ranges of field and meadow with faint suggestions of budding tree and flower in its wild, frolic currents. It bent the branches, it swept the lawn, and sung its song of spring up the garden slopes and around the windows of the stately house upon the hill, and fluttering down, it wafted breaths of bulb and root and crocus-scent away from their winter shrouds of straw through lifted sashes, where feverish patients, suffering "war's cruel curse," in mangled limbs or slow disease, were lying, sleepless and restless, in the long and cleanly garnished wards.

But in the stately house upon the hill, which looked across to the hospital, there was one as sleepless as any under the roof of pain. She had awakened long before light, and, lying there in the darkness, had listened to the wind, and thought of other times and more peaceful days, perhaps. Perhaps, as the wind sung its song of spring, she dreamed, in waking visions, of springs and summers when, listening, she had heard far sweeter songs, wherein no under-note of funeral wailing went over the land. Perhaps, as the gray dawn came creeping on, she remembered dawns when to some soft good-night, spoken while the sweet clash of music was

yet lingering in her ear, she had gone home to dream of some bewildering waltz or moonlight *tête-à-tête*. All of these memories might have kept her company as she lay there listening to the wind, but none of them brought her sleep again. No morning slumber with its tender train of fancies blessed her. Still she, waking, watched the coming of the dawn. It came at last, white and clear, and showed a fair womanly face, whose dark eyes looked wistfully out toward the waving flag that flung forth its stars and stripes across the hill. Lying there, the wistful look grew deeper, and the wind seemed to bring newer and nearer thoughts and fancies as she listened. Into its wild, frolic currents had stolen another tone, — a plaintive tone of entreaty, which whispered and moaned with sobbing insistence. And somewhere out of the lonely garden thickets, all bleak and bare, a bird began piping a faint, shrill, melancholy strain. It mingled with the insisting wind, like a cry or call for companionship. Now near, now far, it swept with the sweeping breezes from hill to hill.

It seemed to stir strange depths of emotion in the soul of her who lay there listening. Her face put on a restless expression. Her eyes strained eagerly beyond the flying flag, as if otherwheres her vision would fain have pierced.

Still the wind kept on its insisting tone, still the little bird piped its urgent cry, until a bar of gold struck suddenly athwart the sky. The sun had risen. She, too, rose now, dressed herself hastily, and, without disturbing the sleeping inmates of the house, descended the stairs and went out into the "wild March morning."

Into the "wild March morning"!

She shivered a little as the willows sighed and brushed her cloak in passing, and half under her breath murmured out, —

"The trees began to whisper and the wind began to roll,
And in the wild March morning I heard them call my soul."

Mechanically she stooped as she saw a clump of frail anemones and the bright blooms of the crocus, and gathered bud and blossom into a hasty bouquet before she proceeded down the avenue. And inhaling their dewy freshness she went on, singing in the same half-absent way the same sweet, mournful verse.

The sentry touched his cap, with a little look of surprise, as he let her pass. The doctor smiled a welcome smile, but, —

"You are early, Miss Freyer," he said.

"Yes; not too early, I hope."

"No; I am glad you have come. There has been a fresh arrival. The beds are all occupied now." He gave her some directions in a lower tone, and she went in.

Stopping here and there for kind, soothing word or tender office, she came to the last in her round, — a bed divided by curtaining from the others.

Some unaccountable tremor arrested her steps here.

Her heart beat, her breath came quicker. What did she dread, who had faced for months all woful spectacles of sabre-cut or gunshot wound? She did not know; but her mind was in a whirl of confusion.

A low groan, proceeding from within the curtained space, broke the spell, and gave her resolution to pen-

etrate the seclusion. What did she see? No fearful sight, surely. A tall, straight figure, lying all its comely length along the low white cot; a head of dark, dark hair; a face pallid, but dusky with natural tint of climate and added bronze of marches and camp exposures; a face stained with clay and gore, sharpened with pain, but lit into life and courage by the unfading fire that beamed forth from the burning splendor of the deep black eyes.

These were the eyes that met Margaret Freyer as she entered, with a glance that thrilled every pulse. And beneath the slender line of dark silk beard that fringed his lip the pale mouth smiled with rapturous greeting, and the faint sweet voice articulated, —

"Margaret! Margaret! I knew you would come."

She knelt beside him; she put her arms about him, and laid her cheek to his. No need for her to speak; but he kept on, —

"So I find you at last, Margaret. I thought it would be so. The bond was vital. I knew you must feel when my life was going out. I knew you would come. Kiss me, Margaret. Ah, my love, my love, I have waited for this!"

Once more he gathered her to his breast, folding her fervently with strength that seemed garnered up for this last embrace. Once more. Then the old soft smile, the old sweet gay voice, faintly falling, as he wandered back to other scenes, —

"How the wind rises, Margaret! Will you go down to the beach? The wind and the rain will never harm my mermaid. And the sea-foam drapery, — where are

the fairy bells? Oh! you have decked yourself with flowers instead. They are wet, wet. Is it the spray, sweet?"

His eyes closed. A moment more, then all fancies left him. He looked up, clear, conscious, and irradiated by the passing spirit.

"My darling, do not weep. This is better than all the world for us. Yes, — I see, — I see it now. You were right, Margaret, — you were true."

And Madison Wythe lay dead.

University Press: John Wilson and Son, Cambridge.

211 TREMONT STREET, BOSTON,
April, 1881.

A LIST OF BOOKS

PUBLISHED BY

Messrs. James R. Osgood & Co.

☞ *Any book on this list sent* POSTPAID *on receipt of the advertised price.*

ANGELL'S (DR. HENRY C.) Records of the Late William M. Hunt. With numerous Illustrations from the works of Mr. Hunt. 1 vol. Small 4to. $1.50.

ARNOLD'S (GEORGE) Poems. Edited, with a Biographical Sketch of the Poet, by WILLIAM WINTER. With Portrait and Illustrations. 1 vol. 16mo. Cloth, $1.50. Half-calf, $3.00. Morocco antique or tree-calf, $4.00.

BARTLETT'S (T. H.) The Life of the late Dr. William Rimmer. With Illustrations from his Paintings, Drawings, and Sculpture. *In the Press.*

BLACKBURN'S (HENRY) Breton Folk: An Artistic Tour in Normandy. With 170 Illustrations by RANDOLPH CALDECOTT. 1 vol. Small 4to. $1.50.

BROUGHAM. See WINTER.

BAKER'S History of Engraving. *In preparation.*

BUDGE'S (ERNEST A., M.R.A.S.) The History of Esarhaddon (Son of Sennacherib), King of Assyria B.C. 681–668. Translated from the Cuneiform Inscriptions upon Cylinders and Tablets in the British Museum Collection. Together with Original Texts, a Grammatical Analysis of each Word, Explanations of the Ideographs by Extracts from the Bi-Lingual Syllabaries, and List of Eponyms, &c. 1 vol. 8vo. Gilt top. $4.00.

BOSTON, The Memorial History of. Including the Present County of Suffolk. 1630-1880. JUSTIN WINSOR, editor-in-chief. Seventy eminent collaborators. 4 vols. 4to. Copiously illustrated. Vols. I. and II. now ready. Vols. III. and IV. in preparation. *Sold by subscription only. Send for Prospectus.*

BURNETT'S (MRS. FRANCES HODGSON) A Fair Barbarian. 1 vol. 16mo. $1.00.

CESNOLA'S (GEN. L. P. DI) The Cesnola Collection of Cyprus Antiquities. A Descriptive and Pictorial Atlas. Large folio. 500 Plates. *Sold by subscription only.*

CHAMBERLAIN'S (BASIL HALL) The Classical Poetry of the Japanese. 1 vol. 8vo. Gilt top. $3.00.

CHENOWETH'S (MRS. C. VAN D.) Stories of the Saints. Beautifully illustrated. 1 vol. 12mo. $2.00.

CLARKE'S (REV. JAMES FREEMAN) Self-Culture. 1 vol. 12mo. Cloth, $1.50. Half-calf, $3.00.

CLEMENT'S (CLARA ERSKINE) A Handbook of Legendary and Mythological Art. With a profusion of Descriptive Illustrations. Fourteenth edition, with Revisions and New Illustrations. 1 vol. Crown 8vo. $3.00.

———— Painters, Sculptors, Architects, Engravers, and their Works. Illustrated profusely. Sixth edition, with Revisions and New Illustrations. 1 vol. Crown 8vo. $3.00.

COLLING'S (J. K.) Art-Foliage. Entirely new Plates from the latest enlarged London edition. Cloth. Folio. $10.00.

CONGDON'S (CHARLES T.) Reminiscences of a Journalist. 1 vol. 12mo. With Portrait. Cloth, $1.50. Half-calf, $3.00.

COOKE'S (ROSE TERRY) Somebody's Neighbors. 1 vol. 12mo. Cloth, $1.50. Half-calf, $3.00.

DAVIDSON'S (J. MORRISON) Eminent English Liberals. 1 vol. 16mo. $1.25.

DICKENS'S (CHARLES) Works. *Cambridge Edition.* 30 vols. 12mo. 600 Illustrations. Gilt top. Half-calf. $100.00. *Sold only in sets.*

———— *The Same. University Edition.* 15 vols. 12mo. 200 Illustrations. Half-calf, $50.00. *Sold only in sets.*

———— Child's History of England. 24 Illustrations. New plates and large type. 12mo. $1.00.

———— *The Same.* 100 fine Illustrations. 12mo. Bevelled and gilt extra. $2.50.

DU MAURIER'S (GEORGE) Pictures from Society. 50 full-page Pictures from *Punch.* 1 vol. 4to. Full gilt. $5.00.

EASTWICK'S (EDWARD B., F.R.S., M.R.A.S.) The Gulistan; or, Rose Garden of Shekh Mushlin'ddin Sâdi of Shiraz. Translated for the first time into prose and verse. 1 vol. 8vo. Gilt top. $3.50.

EWING'S (MRS. EMMA P.) Cooking and Castle-Building. 1 vol. 16mo. $1.00.

FAVORITE-AUTHORS SERIES:

FAVORITE AUTHORS. A Companion-Book of Prose and Poetry. With Steel Portraits. 1 vol. 12mo. Full gilt. Cloth, $2.00. Half-calf, $4.00. Morocco antique, $5.00.

HOUSEHOLD FRIENDS for Every Season. 10 Steel Portraits. 1 vol. 12mo. Full gilt. Cloth, $2.00. Half-calf, $4.00. Morocco antique, $5.00.

GOOD COMPANY FOR EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR. With Steel Portraits. 1 vol. 12mo. Full gilt. Cloth, $2.00. Half-calf, $4.00. Morocco antique, $5.00.

FORBES'S (ARCHIBALD) Glimpses through the Cannon-Smoke. 1 vol. 12mo. $1.00.

GARDNER'S (E. C.) Homes, and How to Make Them; or, Hints on Locating and Building a House. In Letters between an Architect and a Family Man seeking a House. 30 Illustrations. 1 vol. Square 12mo. $1.50.

———— Home Interiors. Illustrated with 62 Plates designed by the Author. 1 vol. Square 12mo. $1.50.

———— Illustrated Homes. Illustrated with 51 Plates designed by the Author. 1 vol. Square 12mo. $1.50.

GOETHE'S Faust. Translated into English Prose by A. HAYWARD. 1 vol. 16mo. $1.25.

GREENOUGH'S (MRS. RICHARD) Mary Magdalene: a Poem. In unique London binding. 1 vol. 12mo. $1.50.

HALE'S (LUCRETIA P.) The Peterkin Papers. 8 Illustrations. 1 vol. 16mo. $1.00.

HALL'S (G. STANLEY, PH.D.) Aspects of German Culture. A Volume of Essays and Criticisms. 1 vol. 12mo. $1.50.

HARTING'S (JAMES EDMUND, F.L.S., F.Z.S.) British Animals Extinct within Historic Times. With Some Account of British Wild White Cattle. Illustrated. 1 vol. 8vo. Gilt top. $4.50.

HARTT'S (PROFESSOR C. F.) Geology and Physical Geography of Brazil. (As ascertained during the Agassiz-Thayer Expedition.) With Maps and 72 Illustrations. 1 vol. 8vo. $5.00. ***In preparation.***

HAYWARD'S (ALMIRA L.) The Birthday Book of American Poets. 1 vol. 18mo. Full gilt. $1.00.

HELIOTYPE GALLERIES. Elegant quarto volumes, richly stamped in gold and colors, with Descriptive Text and full-page Heliotype Engravings.

GEMS OF THE DRESDEN GALLERY. 20 Heliotype Reproductions, with Descriptions. 4to. Full gilt. $7.50.

THE GOETHE GALLERY. 21 Heliotypes, from the Original Drawings by WILHELM VON KAULBACH. With Explanatory Text. 4to. Full gilt. $7.50.

ENGRAVINGS FROM LANDSEER. 20 full-page Heliotypes. With a Biography of Sir Edwin Landseer. 4to. Full gilt. $7.50.

STUDIES FROM RAPHAEL. 24 choice Heliotypes from Raphael's celebrated Paintings. With Text by M. T. B. EMERIC-DAVID, of the Institute of France. 4to. Full gilt. $7.50.

THE TITIAN GALLERY. 20 large Heliotypes of Titian's *chef-d'œuvres.* With Biography of the Artist. 4to. Full gilt. $7.50.

TOSCHI'S ENGRAVINGS, from Frescos by Correggio and Parmegiano.. 24 Heliotypes. 4to. Full gilt. $7.50.

THE GALLERY OF GREAT COMPOSERS. Fine Portraits of Bach, Handel, Gluck, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Von Weber, Mendelssohn, Schuman, Meyerbeer, and Wagner. Biographical Notices by RIMBAULT. 4to. Full gilt. $7.50.

HOWITT'S (MARY) Mabel on Midsummer Day: a Story of the Olden Time. With 12 Silhouette Illustrations by HELEN M. HINDS. 1 vol. Oblong 4to. $1.50.

HUNNEWELL'S (J. F.) Bibliography of Charlestown, Mass., and Bunker Hill. 1 vol. 8vo. Illustrated. $2.00.

IRVING'S WORKS. Spuyten-Duyvil Edition. 12 vols. Large 12mo. Carefully printed on laid tinted paper. 900 pages in each volume, and a frontispiece. The final revisions and corrections of the author. Half-calf. $40.00 a set.

KEENE'S (CHARLES) Our People. 400 Pictures from *Punch.* 1 vol. 4to. Full gilt. $5.00.

KENDRICK'S (PROFESSOR A. C.) Our Poetical Favorites. First, Second, and Third Series. 3 vols. 12mo. In cloth, per vol., $2.00. Half-calf, per vol., $4.00. Morocco antique or tree-calf, per vol., $5.00. *Sold separately or in sets.*

KING'S (CLARENCE) Mountaineering in the Sierra Nevada. 1 vol. 12mo. With Maps. Revised and Enlarged Edition. $2.00.

LESSON IN LOVE (A). Vol. II. of the Round-Robin Series of anonymous novels. *In the Press.*

LONGFELLOW'S (H. W.) Poems. Illustrated Family Edition. Full gilt. Elegantly stamped. 1 vol. 8vo. Cloth, $2.50. Half-calf, $5.00. Morocco antique or tree-calf, $7.50.

MEREDITH'S (Owen) Lucile. With 24 Illustrations by George Du Maurier. 1 vol. 8vo. Cloth, $5.00. Morocco antique or tree-calf, $9.00.

NAMELESS NOBLEMAN (A). Vol. I. of the Round-Robin Series of novels. 16mo. $1.00.

NARJOUX'S (Felix) Journey of an Architect in the North-west of Europe. Fully illustrated. 1 vol. 8 vo. $2.00.

O'BRIEN'S Tales, &c. See Winter.

OSGOOD'S AMERICAN GUIDE-BOOKS:

NEW ENGLAND. With 17 Maps and Plans. 1 vol. 16mo. Flexible cloth. $1.50.

THE MIDDLE STATES. With 22 Maps and Plans. 1 vol. 16mo. Flexible cloth. $1.50.

THE MARITIME PROVINCES. With 9 Maps and Plans. 1 vol. 16mo. Flexible cloth. $1.50.

THE WHITE MOUNTAINS. With 6 Maps and 6 Panoramas. 1 vol. 16mo. Flexible cloth. $1.50.

PERCY'S (Townsend) A Dictionary of the Stage. *In the Press.*

PERKINS'S (F. B.) Congressional District Vote Map of the United States. In cloth case. 50 cents.

PRESTON'S (Miss Harriet W.) The Georgics of Vergil. 1 vol. 18mo. $1.00.

POE'S (Edgar Allan) Select Works, Poetical and Prose. Household Edition. With Portrait. 1 vol. 12mo. Cloth, $2.00. Half-calf, $4.00. Morocco antique or tree-calf, $5.00.

——— Poetical Works. Diamond Edition. 1 vol. 18mo. Cloth, $1.00. Half-calf, $2.25. Morocco antique, $3.00. Tree-calf, $3.50.

PUTNAM'S (J. Pickering) The Open Fireplace in all Ages. With 269 Illustrations. 1 vol. 12mo. $2.00.

RENAN'S (Ernest) English Conferences. Rome and Christianity: Marcus Aurelius. Translated by Clara Erskine Clement. 1 vol. 16mo. 75 cents.

ROUND-ROBIN SERIES (The). A new series of original anonymous novels by the best writers, begun in the spring of 1881. Each novel is complete in one volume. 16mo. $1.00. The first volume, *A Nameless Nobleman*, is now ready. The second, *A Lesson in Love*, is in the press.

SARGENT'S (Mrs. John T.) Sketches and Reminiscences of the Radical Club. Illustrated. 1 vol. 12mo. Cloth, $2.00. Full gilt, $2.50. Half-calf, $4.00.

SENSIER'S (Alfred) Jean-François Millet: Peasant and Painter. Translated by Helena de Kay. With Illustrations. 1 vol. Square 8vo. $3.00.

SHAKESPEARE'S WORKS. Handy-Volume Edition. 13 vols. Illustrated. 32mo. In neat box. Cloth, $7.50. Morocco antique, $15.00.

SHALER (Professor N. S.) and *DAVIS'S* (Wm. M.) Illustrations of the Earth's Surface. Part I. Glaciers. Copiously illustrated with Heliotypes. Large folio.

SHEDD'S (Mrs. Julia A.) Famous Painters and Paintings. With 18 full-page Heliotypes. 1 vol. 12mo. $3.00. *In preparation.*

SHERRATT'S (R. J.) The Elements of Hand-Railing. 33 Plates. Small folio. $2.00.

SIKES'S (Wirt) British Goblins, Welsh Folk-Lore, Fairy Mythology, Legends, and Traditions. Illustrated. 1 vol. 8vo. Bound in gold and black. Gilt top. $4.00.

SPOONER (Samuel) and *CLEMENT'S* (Mrs. Clara Erskine) A Biographical History of the Fine Arts. *In preparation.*

SWEETSER'S (M. F.) Artist-Biographies. Illustrated with 12 Heliotypes in each volume. 5 vols. 16mo. Cloth. $1.50 each.

Vol. I. Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, Michael Angelo.
Vol. II. Titian, Guido Reni, Claude Lorraine.
Vol. III. Sir Joshua Reynolds, Turner, Landseer.
Vol. IV. Dürer, Rembrandt, Van Dyck.
Vol. V. Fra Angelico, Murillo, Allston.

The set, in cloth, 5 vols., $7.50. Half-calf, $15.00. Tree-calf, $25.00. The same are also published in smaller volumes, one biography in each. 15 vols. 18mo. Per vol., 50 cents.

SYMONDS'S (John Addington) New and Old: A Volume of Verse. 1 vol. 12mo. $1.50.

TENNYSON'S (Alfred) A Dream of Fair Women. 40 Illustrations. Arabesque binding. 1 vol. 4to. $5.00. In Morocco antique or tree-calf, $9.00.

———— Ballads and other Poems. Author's Edition, with Portrait. 1 vol. 16mo. 50 cents.

TENNYSON'S (ALFRED) Poems. Illustrated Family Edition. Full gilt. Elegantly stamped. 1 vol. 8vo. $2.50. Half-calf, $5.00. Morocco antique or tree-calf, $7.50.

TOWNSEND'S (S. NUGENT) Our Indian Summer in the Far West. Illustrated with full-page Photographs of Scenes in Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, &c. 1 vol. 4to. $25.00.

UPTON'S (GEORGE P.) Woman in Music. With Heliotype Illustrations. 1 vol. 12mo. $2.00. Half-calf, $4.00.

VIOLLET-LE-DUC'S (E.-E.) Discourses on Architecture. Translated by HENRY VAN BRUNT. With 18 large Plates and 110 Woodcuts. 1 vol. 8vo. $5.00.

_____ Discourses on Architecture. Vol. II. *Nearly ready.*

_____ The Story of a House. Illustrated with 62 Plates and Cuts. 1 vol. 12mo. $2.00.

_____ The Habitations of Man in all Ages. With 103 Illustrations. 1 vol. 12mo. $2.00.

_____ Annals of a Fortress. With 85 Illustrations. 1 vol. 12mo. $2.00.

WARE'S (PROFESSOR WILLIAM R.) Modern Perspective. For Architects, Artists, and Draughtsmen. 1 vol. 12mo. *In the Press.*

WHIST, American or Standard. By G. W. P. Second Edition revised. 1 vol. 16mo. $1.00.

WHITTIER'S (JOHN G.) Poems. Illustrated Family Edition. Full gilt. Elegantly stamped. 1 vol. 8vo. $2.50. Half-calf, $5.00. Morocco antique or tree-calf, $7.50.

WINCKELMANN'S (JOHN) The History of Ancient Art. Translated by DR. G. H. LODGE. 78 Copper-plate Engravings. 2 vols. 8vo. Cloth, $9.00. Half-calf, $18.00. Morocco antique or tree-calf, $25.00.

_____ *The Same.* Large-paper Edition. Large 4to. $30.00. *Only* 100 *copies printed.*

WINTER'S (WILLIAM) Poems. New Revised Edition. 1 vol. 16mo. Cloth, $1.50. Half-calf, $3.00. Morocco antique or tree-calf, $4.00.

_____ The Trip to England. With full-page Illustrations by JOSEPH JEFFERSON. 1 vol. 16mo. $2.00. Half-calf, $4.00. Morocco antique or tree-calf, $5.00.

_____ The Life, Stories, and Poems of John Brougham. Edited by W. WINTER. 1 vol. 12mo. Illustrated. $2.00.

_____ Fitz-James O'Brien's Tales, Sketches, and Poems. Edited by W. WINTER. 1 vol. 12mo. Illustrated. $2.00.

THE

AMERICAN ARCHITECT

AND BUILDING NEWS.

An Illustrated Weekly Journal of Architecture and the Building Trades.

Each number is accompanied by four fine quarto illustrations, while illustrative cuts are liberally used in the text. Although the paper addresses itself primarily to architects and builders, by its discussions upon matters of common interest to those engaged in building pursuits, it is the object of the editors to make it acceptable and necessary to that large portion of the educated classes who are interested in and appreciate the importance of good architectural surroundings, to civil and sanitary engineers, draughtsmen, antiquaries, craftsmen of all kinds, and all intelligent readers.

TERMS: $7.50 *a year, or* $6.00 *in advance, postage free;* 15 *cents a number; the bound volumes for* 1876, 1877, 1878, 1879, *and* 1880, $9.00 *each.*

Specimen numbers and advertising rates furnished on application to the publishers.

Heliotype Engravings.

These beautiful pictures are exact facsimile reproductions by the Heliotype Process of rare and costly engravings and etchings, from paintings by the old masters, and of the finest specimens to be found of modern French and English publications.

They are printed upon the same paper, with the same ink, as the original engravings, and will never fade.

They are of a uniform size (19 x 24 *inches*), *and are sold at the remarkably low price of*

FIFTY CENTS EACH.

Catalogues sent to any address upon application. Any of the Heliotypes will be sold separately, and sent postpaid to any address upon receipt of price.

HELIOTYPE ART-GALLERY,

213 Tremont Street, Boston.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 016 165 496 6